



UNIVERSITY OF
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**Indigenous Children in Urban Schools in Jalisco,
Mexico: An Ethnographic Study on Schooling
Experiences**

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Luz María Stella Moreno Medrano
March 2017

To my father, Alfonso Moreno Leyva, who was able to support the beginning of this journey physically and in spirit until the end.

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Abstract

Political recognition of the multicultural nature of Mexico has advanced the understanding of how people live together, as well as how they value and respect each other's differences. The migration of indigenous populations from rural areas of the country to urban settings has transformed the cities, and also schools, into places of remarkable cultural diversity. This study examines the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in two urban schools in Jalisco, Mexico. By studying the processes of identity formation, I focus on understanding how indigenous children represent themselves within the wider social discourses and dynamics of power, which might be either reinforcing or limiting their opportunities to strengthen their ethnicity.

By using an ethnographic approach, from a critical theory perspective, this study focuses on listening to indigenous children's voices, rather than the other voices and experiences within the school setting. The study was conducted in two schools in the municipality of Zapopan, in the State of Jalisco, Mexico. Over a period of 14 months, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 22 indigenous children, balanced by gender and age, from 4 different ethnic groups: Mazahua, Nahuatl, Purepecha, and Totonaco. I also interviewed 22 *mestizo* children, 10 teachers, 3 principals, and 7 parents.

The schooling experiences of indigenous children are discussed in the study. Elements such as language use, territory (geographic and symbolic), family networks, and their attachment to their communities of origin were identified as the crucial factors for indigenous children to represent, or sometimes deny, themselves as being indigenous. The analysis also highlights the silences, racism, and ethnic blindness that indigenous children face in urban schools. Meritocratic educational approaches within neoliberal discourses of competition, individual effort, and autonomy were embedded in the children's schooling experiences, thereby shaping their learner identities. This study seeks to contribute to the pursuit of providing indigenous children with educational services that recognise and reinforce their ethnic identity. It is also my objective that children's voices open up a dialogue with those responsible for the educational and social policies, in order to create a common front that might challenge the racism veiled as indifference and/or a desire for 'equality' in Mexican urban schools.

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Acronyms

CDI	Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas
CIESAS	Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social
CNI	Consejo Nacional Indígena
COCOPA	Comisión de Concordia y Pacificación
CONAPRED	Comisión Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación
CONEVAL	Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política Pública de Desarrollo Social
CRT	Critical Race Theory
DEI	Department of Indigenous Education
DOF	Diario Oficial de la Federación
ENLACE	Evaluación Nacional de Logro Académico en Centros Escolares
EZLN	Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INEE	Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación
INI	Instituto Nacional Indigenista
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SEDESOL	Secretaría de Desarrollo Social
SEIE	Seminario Escuelas, Indígenas y Etnicidad
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública
UIA	Universidad Iberoamericana

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PART ONE: Context and research approach

Chapter 1: Research context

1.1 Introduction

This research is concerned with the schooling experiences of indigenous children in urban schools in Jalisco, Mexico. The study seeks to contribute to the political and cultural recognition of indigenous peoples in Mexico and Latin America. By privileging indigenous children's voices regarding their experiences within the education system, it is my aim to uncover the deep discrimination, racism, and racial blindness of Mexican society, and more specifically, of the Mexican education system. The main purpose of my research is to examine the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in urban schools and analyse the extent to which schools are strengthening or weakening indigenous children's identities.

This first chapter provides contextual information regarding the situation of indigenous peoples in Mexico. It attempts to give this research a frame in order to understand indigenous peoples' struggles for political recognition within the colonial discourses that still prevail in Mexican society. It also presents the research questions that guided this thesis and the structure in which the results are organized.

1.2 Relevance of the study

The economic crisis of the Mexican countryside has forced a large proportion of farmers to migrate to medium and large cities. In 1950, less than 43% of the Mexican population lived in urban localities, but by 2010, this proportion had increased to 78% (INEGI, 2010). Many of those migrants are people from the country's different ethnic groups, who have settled in the cities in search of better economic opportunities.

The metropolitan area of Mexico City is one of the regions with the highest indigenous immigration rates. The social and economic conditions of the immigrant groups vary markedly. For instance, Mixtecos, Purepechas, and Zapotecos have a longer history of permanent migration and display a higher degree of social integration, as well as a higher rate of school participation for their children (Bertely, 1998). In the schools where this research was conducted, I was able to identify children whose parents spoke Mazahua, Purepecha, Nahuatl, and Totonaca in the state of Jalisco.

In 2005, the National Council for Preventing Discrimination (CONAPRED) and the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) conducted a survey that showed that 43% of Mexicans consider that indigenous peoples will have social limitations due to their ethnic characteristics. Three out of ten participants believed that indigenous peoples should modify their 'ethnic behaviour' if they wanted to escape poverty. Forty per cent of the people surveyed indicated that they would be willing to organise themselves with their neighbours in order to prevent indigenous groups from settling nears their homes. However, the majority of the Mexicans surveyed did not consider themselves as racists (SEDESOL & CONAPRED, 2005). In 2010, the same survey conducted by CONAPRED (2010) on indigenous groups showed that the three main problems faced by indigenous peoples in Mexico include:

1. Discrimination (19.5 %)
2. Poverty (13.3 %)
3. Lack of government support (9.4 %)

Almost 40% of indigenous peoples indicated that they did not have the similar access to job opportunities as the rest of the *mestizo* population; and 33% that they did not have similar opportunities to receive support, while 37% believed that their civil rights were not respected because of their accent or clothing (CONAPRED & UNAM, 2010).

The Federal Act to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination of 2003 (and reformulated in 2014), the 169 ILO agreements, and the Declaration of the United Nations about the rights of Indigenous People, have not been able to close the gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous populations. Stereotypes and prejudices are embedded so deeply that they have led to a normalisation of the inequalities towards indigenous populations in the country.

Discriminatory remarks against indigenous peoples are entrenched in the daily discourse of the average Mexican citizen. It is common to hear the expression likening a person to 'an Indian' if that person fails to speak, dress or behave "appropriately", or simply because of skin colour. David Gillborn uses the term 'popular racism' to characterise racism in 'its crudest form' (Gillborn, 1990, p. 9). Popular racism describes

the nineteenth-century belief system in which the term 'race' was attached to biological differences between human groups. Moreno- Figueroa argues that racism prevails in Mexican society as

diverse practices of discrimination and exclusion based on ideas of inherent 'racial' superiority that normalize control, domination and exclusion of one group over others, while legitimating privilege and oppression. A key feature of the way racism has pervaded social life in Mexico is the relationship between racist practices and ideas about 'race'. Racist practices have been discursively separated from the particular understandings of 'race' from which they have emanated, acquiring dynamics of their own. I call these complex dynamics 'racist logics', racial differentiation that permeates social life (Moreno-Figueroa, 2010, p. 389).

Oehmichen (2001) conducted a survey among an urban, working-class group of people in Mexico City, in order to show the free associations being made in relation to the term 'Indian' or 'indigenous'. She also applied the same instrument to a sample to workers of the National Indigenist Institute (INI), today called the National Commission for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples (CDI). The urban, working-class group associated the term 'indigenous' with farmers, people with no culture, dirty, indigents, miserable, marginalised, drunks, and people who do not want to work, among others stereotypes. In contrast, INI workers associated the word with aboriginal, native, our roots, the voiceless, marginalised, own culture, submissive, etc. Oehmichen recognised that the INI workers had internalised an institutional discourse that does not associate the term 'indigenous' with a deficit and paternalistic perspective, reinforcing the notion of urban cities as the 'nucleus of the conqueror's power' (Oehmichen, 2001, p. 257). Castellanos explains this phenomenon in the light of Mexican colonial history:

The cities have been the settlement of power [...] It is said that the indigenous peoples arrive, invade and come to the city, but they don't 'live' in the city, they are always strangers; and if their presence is assumed, they don't 'know' how to live in it (my translation, Castellanos, 2004, p. 108).

In these moments of worldwide polarisation: the recent triumph of Trump in the United States, Brexit in the United Kingdom, and the rejection of the Peace Accords in Colombia, among other recent political events, there appear to be radical differences in perceptions and points of view among different social sectors. There is a deep fear of embracing diversity and visible and invisible ‘walls’ preventing the contact with ‘the other’. Indigenous peoples in Mexico are conflated with the urban poor. The urban cities in Mexico are ethnically blind and when ethnicity is explicit, racism comes to the fore as symbolic violence, as part of the *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1998) of the Mexican society. As Wade argues “race and class are intimately interwoven” and “racial ideologies can have very material effects” (Wade, 2015, p. 1296)

I believe that studying the schools’ influence on the process of strengthening or limiting ethnic identities has an enormous importance in these moments of political uncertainty: the rural are becoming urban, the Centro American are making Mexico their pathway to the unwelcoming United States, and many immigrants in the United States are starting to come back to Mexico due to the uncertainties of the migration policies of the recent US Administration. In this context, I can see that Mexico, more than ever, will display a complex multicultural composition that it is perhaps not ready to embrace.

The school is a powerful apparatus that, since colonial times, has reproduced the mission of erasing cultural differences. The Mexican school has a strong tradition of educating for ‘equality’, as a product of *mestizaje*, understood as a ‘national ideology, state project, and daily practice’ where ethnicity and race have not been part of the discussion (Saldivar, 2014, p. 91).

1.3 Indigenous peoples in Mexico

Indigenous populations are the historical inhabitants of a specific territory either from before colonisation took place or during the formation of a nation-state, or those who are currently isolated from the influence of the nation-state. The term ‘indigenous’ implies a history of colonial subjugation and, therefore, is a political term (Anaya, 2004). The term ‘indigenous’ is in and of itself racist, with a deep colonial history. It reduces a diversity of social groups to one generic term, with the commonality being

that they all lived within a territory that was then stolen by the colonisers. For Fanon, the term ‘indigenous’ is synonymous with ‘native’ and it is ‘a nervous condition introduced and maintained by the settler among colonised people with their consent’ (Fanon, 1961, p. 20). Within this definition, Fanon explains the process of rehumanisation and decolonisation, which indigenous peoples must experience through a profound social movement, if they want to reach their liberation.

Based on the definition given by the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 1989), the Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples applies to:

- a) Tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;
- b) Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provision of this Convention apply.

The ILO C169 Convention highlights the importance of self-determination of indigenous or tribal as a ‘fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provision of this Convention apply’ (ILO, 1989).

The Convention requests governments to develop measures for (ILO, 1989, Art.2):

- a) Ensuring that members of these peoples benefit on an equal footing from the rights and opportunities which national laws and regulations grant to other members of the population;
- b) Promoting the full realisation of the social, economic and cultural rights of these peoples with respect for their social and cultural identity, their customs and traditions and their institutions;
- c) Assisting the members of the peoples concerned to eliminate socio-economic gaps that may exist between indigenous and other members of the national community, in a manner compatible with their aspirations and ways of life.

Within the context of this International Convention, in 1992 Mexico was recognised as a multicultural and multilingual nation. Article 2 of the Mexican Constitution defines indigenous as ‘those who descend from peoples who inhabited the current territory of the country at the beginning of the colonisation and who maintain their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, or part of them’ (DOF, 2016).

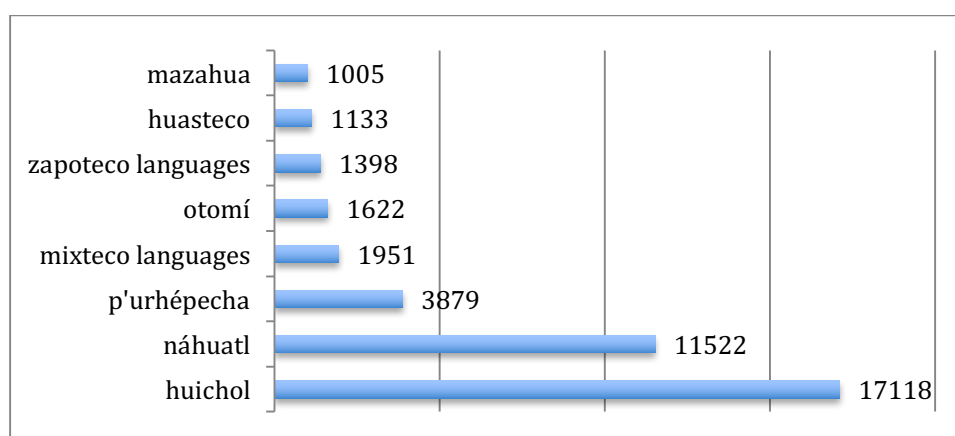
Consciousness of their ethnic identity should be a fundamental criterion to determine to the legal position of indigenous peoples. The right to self-determination and autonomy attempts to ensure that indigenous peoples decide their own normative systems, traditional authorities and preserve and enrich their territories, languages, knowledge and other elements of their cultural identity in the same that the rest of the country does.

National survey data estimations, conducted over the past decade in Mexico, illustrate a dramatic change in the multicultural composition of the country. In 2000, the National Institute of Statistics, Geography, and Informatics (INEGI) reported that approximately 12 million people were indigenous, more than 10% of the total national population (INEGI, 2000). In the second half of the twentieth century, language became the only criterion to identify indigenous peoples, displacing other criteria, such as food, footwear or clothing (Martínez - Casas, Saldivar, Flores, & Sue, 2014). It was not until 2010 that the national census integrated the option of self-definition into the national survey, and the proportion of indigenous peoples in the country increased to 14.8% (INEGI, 2010).

According to the most recent survey data of INEGI (2015), 21.5% of the Mexican population define themselves as indigenous, with 6.52% speaking an indigenous language, while 12.32% of the indigenous language speakers do not speak Spanish. While the criterion of self-adscription was adopted during the Constitutional reform of 1992, it was up to each state legislature to approve it. Thus, the ethno-linguistic and geographic criteria to identify indigenous populations are still the predominant methods used by states and municipalities, making invisible the considerable indigenous populations living in urban cities. Some estimations suggests that almost 30% of indigenous peoples live in cities of more than 100,000, and almost 50% are living in cities with populations of between 2,500 and 15,000 (Czarny & Martínez, 2013).

In Mexico, there are more than 69 indigenous languages, with 364 linguistic variations. The languages that are mostly spoken are: Nahuatl (23.4 %), Maya (11.6 %), Tseltal (7.5 %), Mixteco (7 %), Tsotsil (6.6 %), Zapoteco (6.5 %), Otomí (4.2 %), Totonaco (3.6 %), Chol (3.4 %), Mazateco (3.2 %), Huasteco (2.4 %), and Mazahua (2 %) (INEGI, 2010). Jalisco has a population of 6,569,065 million. The proportion of people who self-ascribe as indigenous is 11.12%, while only 0.77% speak an indigenous language and 9.02% of those do not speak Spanish (INEGI, 2015). The indigenous population of Jalisco does not even reach the one per cent of the total population, even though there is an original indigenous population in the state (Wixárica). The languages with more presence in the state of Jalisco are Huichol (0.26 %), Nahua (0.18 %), Purepecha (0.06 %), Mixteco languages (0.03 %), Otomí (0.02 %), Zapoteca languages (0.02 %), Huasteco (0.02 %), Mazahua (0.02 %) (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. Absolute numbers of indigenous languages in Jalisco (INEGI 2010)



Based on 2014 estimations, there are approximately 4 million of indigenous children, aged between 3 and 17 years old (INEE & UNICEF, 2016) in Mexico. Of this group, 1.8 million speak an indigenous language, 1.4 million live in rural areas, 312,000 live in semi-urban localities, while around 100,000 live in urban cities (INEE & UNICEF, 2016). I think that these estimations of children living in urban areas are highly under-represented since there is no way to identify indigenous populations in the big cities, and as will be explained later, the educational and social systems are not prepared to make indigenous populations in the cities, visible.

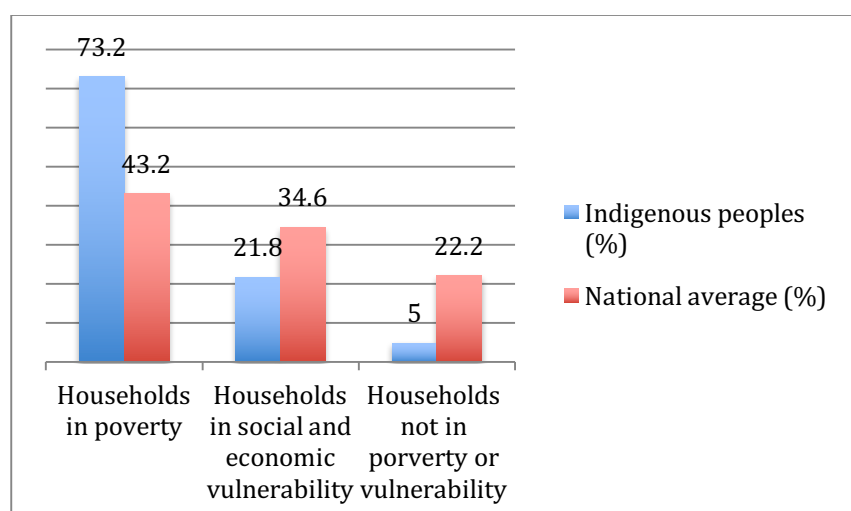
Only 13% of indigenous peoples reported in the last census that they were monolingual. This proportion (15 % women and 9 % men) coincides with the most vulnerable in terms of access to public services.

Table 1.1. Socioeconomic indicators of indigenous language speakers in Mexico
(INEGI, 2010)

Literacy	28.2% of the population older than 5 years do not read or write
	33.8% of women older than 12 years old do not read or write (22.3% are men)
Access to public services	42% do not have access to health services.
Access to employment	2.7% have access to a formal job

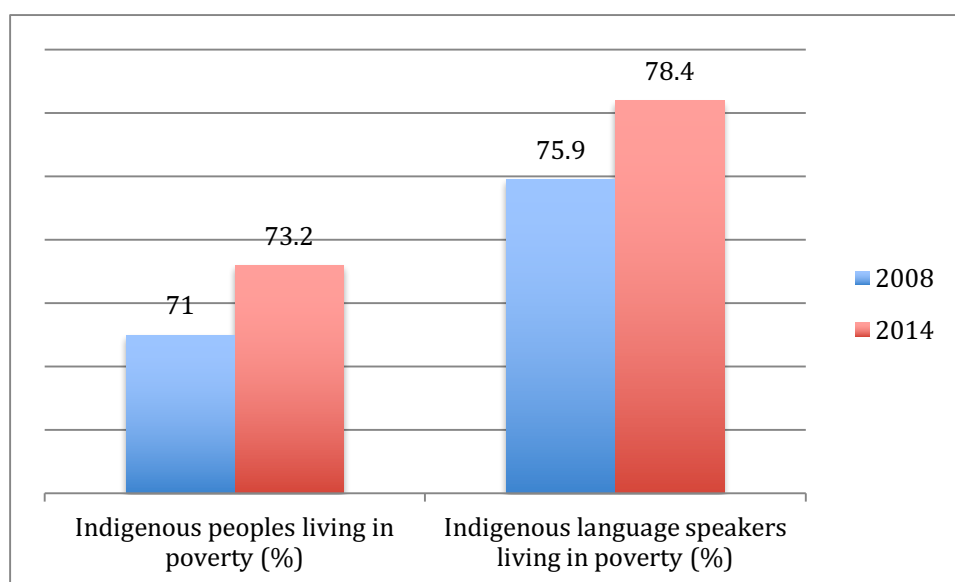
Indigenous peoples are the most economically and socially marginalised population in Mexico. In 2014, 73.2% of indigenous households lived in poverty (43.2 % being the national average). Figure 1.2 shows some of the national poverty indicators conducted by the National Council of Social Development Policy Evaluation (CONEVAL):

Figure 1.2. Poverty at the household level among indigenous population and the national average
(CONEVAL, 2014)



Poverty indices among indigenous peoples have increased over the last decade. As shown in Figure 1.3, there has been an increase of more than four percentage points in the poverty index among indigenous peoples and indigenous language speakers.

Figure 1.3. Poverty increase levels among indigenous populations and indigenous language speakers in 2008 and 2014 (CONEVAL, 2014)



A recent study conducted by UNICEF and the National Institute of Educational Evaluation (INEE) (2016) concerning the situation of indigenous children in Mexico, highlighted that 53.9% of children between 0 and 17 years old live in poverty in Mexico, while 78.6% live in indigenous households and 90.8% of children living in poverty are indigenous language speakers. The social and economic inequalities experienced by this social group are dramatic, a situation echoed by the educational attainment indicators (Figure 1.4):

Figure 1.4. Educational attainment in Mexico in 2014
(INEE & UNICEF, 2016)

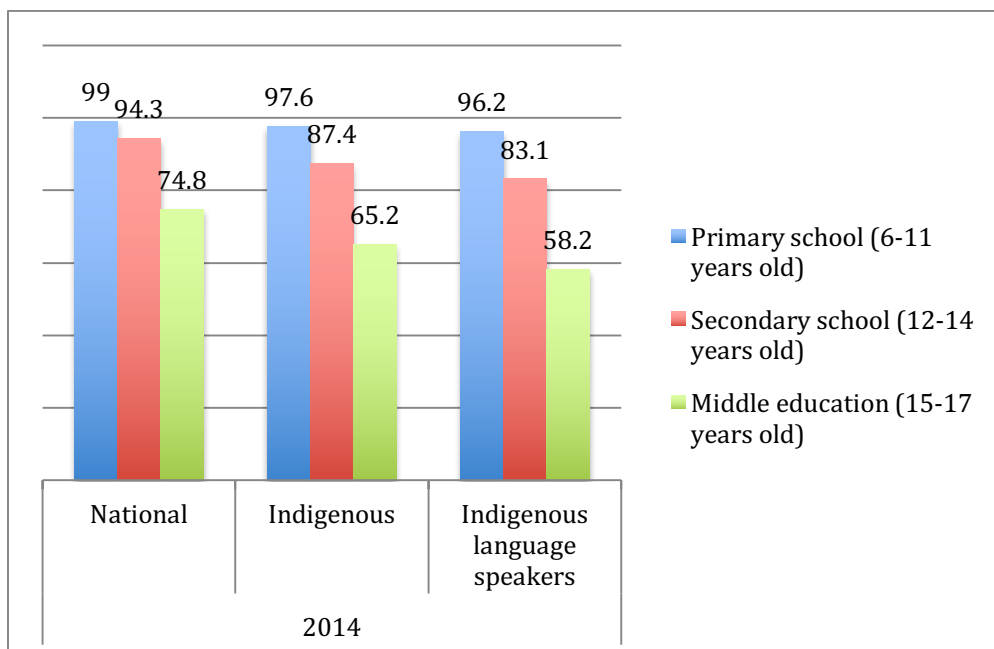
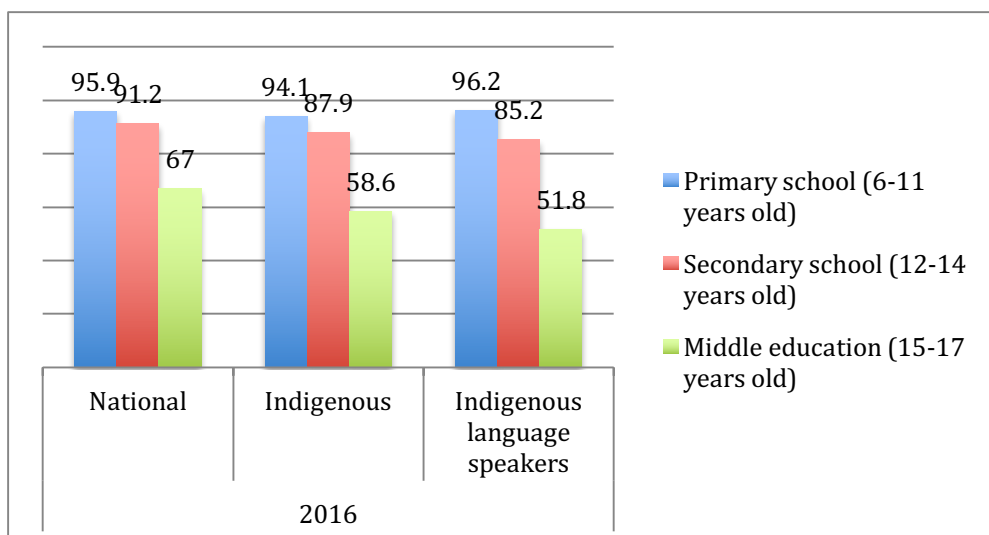


Figure 1.5. Educational attainment in Mexico in 2016
(INEE & UNICEF, 2016)

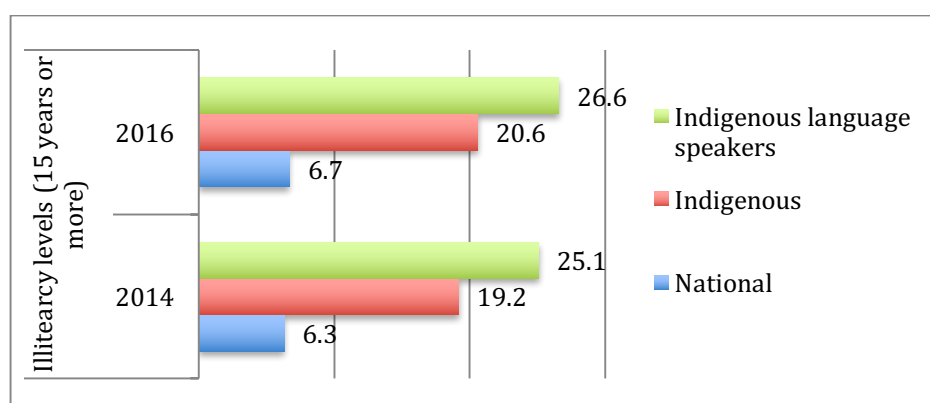


As shown in Figures 1.4 and 1.5, there have been no changes in the educational attainment levels in Mexico in the last two years. Furthermore, there has been a national decrease in the number of children attending middle education, with a wider gap among

indigenous language speakers (58.2 % in 2014 and 51.8 % in 2016). This might also be explained by the fact that schools are promoting a language loss, and by the end of their schooling life many indigenous languages were lost.

Illiteracy levels are also dramatic among indigenous populations, compared to national averages, as seen in Figure 1.6.

Figure 1.6. Illiteracy levels in Mexico in 2016
(INEE & UNICEF, 2016)



Since the formation of the Mexican liberal state, Mexican history has been characterised by a systematic refusal to recognise indigenous peoples as subjects of political rights – from the colonial times and the quest for independence, through the Mexican revolution, to the construction of a ‘democratic’ nation in the twenty first century (De la Peña, 2006). As a result of many political struggles, especially those initiated after the Zapatista movement, there have been some achievements in meeting indigenous demands regarding cultural recognition. However, the political structure of the system has resulted in a reluctance to open up spaces for social and political indigenous organisations.

Mexico’s indigenous peoples have disproportionally suffered the effects of marginalisation and poverty since the time of the Spanish conquest. The Spanish took over indigenous land and forced its people to work in economic systems of exploitation and indebtedness (Wade, 1997).

The idea of constructing a 'Mexican identity' started with the movements of gaining independence from the Spanish empire in 1821. The *criollos* (Creole) – Spanish descendants who were born in America – were the leaders of the Mexican war for independence. The *criollos* brought together the social demands of *mestizos* (Indian and Spaniard offspring) and Indians, in what de la Peña calls a quest for 'a Mexican "ethnicity" nourished by soil, religion, a common history of oppression and the will to join together in a free society' (De la Peña, 2006, p. 280).

The first decade of the nineteenth century was characterised by the consolidation of a liberal state in which *criollos* were the elite and *mestizos* were the growing middle-class (De la Peña, 2006). The ideal of the liberal state was to eradicate the Indian race and to mix it with the white population to form 'a *mestizo* nation' (Gall, 2004). Under the liberal state, the very few privileges that indigenous peoples had during the colonial times were dismantled; one of the most critical being the right to collectively own land. In the belief that indigenous land would be more productive if privately owned, most of the indigenous land became concentrated into large extensions called *haciendas*, which were mostly owned by the *criollos* (De la Peña, 2006).

The concentration of land in the hands of the few was one of the main causes of the Mexican revolution in 1910. Although the Mexican revolution (1910-1920) nominally advanced some of the indigenous peoples' demands, in states such as Chiapas, the Mexican revolution had practically no effect. The power of the landowners prevailed and the Mexican government distributed land titles to indigenous peoples and farmers in an inequitable fashion. Land was distributed to two or three different owners at the same time and often the borders were not clearly delineated. This situation caused upheaval both for the government as well as within the communities. Many indigenous peoples had no other option but to work in the *fincas* or *haciendas* under strict supervision of a landowner for a meagre salary and often in brutal working conditions (Stavenhagen, 2003).

Being indigenous after the Revolution was a state of transition towards becoming a citizen – the ideal of *mestizaje* - (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014). With the objective of 'mexicanising' the Indians, assimilationist policies were put into place under the name of 'indigenismo' (indigenism), which de la Peña evaluates as a 'bold but finally

unsuccessful strategy to recover and reinterpret Mexico's indigenous past in order to construct a modern, "revolutionary" national identity' (De la Peña, 2006, p. 281). The ideal of *mestizaje*, far from achieving its assimilationist goal, both excluded and served as a justification to subordinate indigenous peoples (De la Peña, 2006, p. 281), and to build, as Gall points out an 'assimilationist racism of State' (Gall, 2004, p. 243). Schools and social institutions played a defining role in this ideal of *mestizaje*. Creating a national Mexican identity was the ideal of a 'modern' nation, and *mestizos* were considered 'the superior outcome of this evolutionary process' (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014, p. 1023).

During the middle decades of the twentieth century, the 'indigenist' approach was also implemented in other countries in Latin America. During the seventies and eighties, this approach was highly contested by indigenous intellectuals around the country, who considered it a 'racist proposition' (De la Peña, 2006). Government policies started to shift towards the recognition of certain ethnic rights, such as in the case of bilingual education. Schools were a strategic means to achieving this assimilationist approach (Levi, 2002). The official language of instruction was Spanish and the school curriculum was designed to marginalise the indigenous cultures and to celebrate western civilisation (Gall, 2004). Textbooks were freely distributed to all children of school age, in which the country and indigenous peoples were portrayed as 'folkloric' or as part of a nostalgic and romantic past (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014, p. 1108).

The 'Indian problem' was addressed through implementing paternalistic and compensatory programmes to reduce the economic inequalities, with no room for indigenous groups to evaluate their usefulness and relevance (De la Peña, 2006). As Martínez-Casas *et al.* argue:

Integration policies had not solved the country's vast social inequalities, and for this reason elites began to say there were no more indigenous, just peasants, and emphasized class over ethnicity (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014, p. 1097).

During the 1990s, Mexico and other Latin American governments witnessed several important social movements regarding indigenous rights. In 1991, Mexico ratified Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation, which recognised indigenous

rights, although, as de la Peña argues, ‘the validity of the Indian authorities and normative systems, the legitimacy of territorial demands, and the right of the indigenous peoples to participate in all public decisions that affected their lives and resources were not included’ (De la Peña, 2006, p. 288).

In 1991, the Mexican Congress introduced a significant reform to the 4th Article of the Mexican Constitution, recognising Mexico as a multicultural nation. For the first time in history, indigenous peoples were included in such a document. However, as has been widely debated, recognition of the multicultural composition of the country did not translate into the recognition of indigenous peoples as subjects with political rights. In 1992, there was another Constitutional reform: Article 27, regarding land ownership, opened the possibility for the *ejidos* (communal lands) to enter the private market, putting indigenous lands at a disadvantage in the face of capitalist interests. This change was reinforced by the introduction of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the United States, Canada and Mexico in 1994. On 1 January 1994, the very day the NAFTA took effect, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) declared war against the Mexican government. After long negotiations, the government and the EZLN signed the San Andres Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture in 1996. The San Andres Accords is a bill that recognises indigenous peoples as ‘entities of public rights’. It also promotes intercultural education and the right to self-determination and political autonomy, the latter being one of the most controversial aspects of the Accords especially because Mexicans consider it as constituting the threat of ‘balkanisation’ (De la Peña, 2006) or the fragmentation of the country. The EZLN movement in 1994 placed the notion of ethnic citizenship (De la Peña, 2001) or intercultural citizenship (Bertely, 2006a) on the political agenda, seeking spaces for political recognition with equity and justice.

Although the Mexican government and the EZLN signed the San Andres Accords in 1996, it was not until 1998 that President Zedillo sent the bill, converted into a proposal, to the Concord and Pacification Commission (COCOPA). The proposal, however, had substantial differences from the original, especially in terms of the autonomy and customary law of indigenous peoples. Indigenous communities, contrary to what was proposed in the San Andres Accords, were considered by the Constitutional amendments as ‘entities of public interest’ rather than ‘entities of public rights’ before

the municipalities, but not at a state and national level. The Indigenous National Congress (CNI) objected to the amendments before the Supreme Court of Justice, but the Supreme Court rejected the bill arguing that ‘constitutional amendments were an exclusive competence of the Congress of the Union’ (De la Peña, 2006, p. 292). While De la Peña did assess some elements of the Constitutional reform to be positive, he and other intellectuals posited that the bill fell short of recognising indigenous peoples as subjects of civil and political rights (Levi, 2002), arguing for the need to move forward, as a society, towards the new cultural politics of difference (Gall, 2004). The Indigenous Cultures and Rights’ bill became ‘the bill of landowners and racist cultures and rights’ (Gall, 2004, p. 244).

1.4 Racism in Latin America

The concepts of race and ethnicity are social constructions built around the phenotypical variation that emerged within the context of colonisation and, as such, served as ‘vital signifiers of difference during European colonial encounters’ (Wade, 1997, p. 15). Race and ethnicity are ideas that make distinctions between the ‘self’ and the ‘others’ in terms of phenotypical (race) or cultural differences (ethnicity). Wade points out that it is important to distinguish between race and ethnicity, especially because of the historical weight of colonialism that race brings into the picture. In Wade’s words ‘it is necessary to highlight the history of race by calling it by its name’ (Wade, 1997, p. 21), since the diverse forms of racism are rooted in the history of colonial encounters.

For the purposes of this research, I use the term ‘ethnicity’ rather than ‘race’ in order to structure my analysis within the framework of the politics of differences, and move away from physical and deterministic racial differences. However, I use the term ‘race’ to refer to the processes of deep racism that persist as an internal colonisation within Mexican society (Cusicanqui, 2014). Peter Wade argues that “‘Ethnicity’ has often been used in place of ‘race’ either because the very use of the word race has been thought to propagate racism by implying that biological races actually exist or because, tainted by its history, it simply “smelt bad” (Wade, 1997, p. 16), whereas ethnicity is at the centre of the discourse of the politics of difference and it has been commonly used as a way of categorising complex cultural differences. The cultural politics of identity and difference in the USA, Europe and Latin America argue for a new concept of identity

that is not fixed or static, but is understood as the multiple ways in which people identify themselves (Wade, 1997).

Marable argues that racism in Latin America is ‘a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture and mannerisms, and color’ (Marable, 1992, p. 5). The phenomenon of racism has its origins in three historical moments: the colonisation period, the enlightenment epoch and the consolidation of the nation-states (Gall, 2004; Oehmichen, 2005). In Latin America, racial categories are understood differently from those in other countries, determined by difference the contexts of historical, colonial encounters, as Wade argues:

The social constructedness of racial categories can be illustrated by a well-known contrast between North America and Latin America. In the former region, the category ‘black’ supposedly includes anyone with a known ‘drop of the black blood’; thus someone known to have had a black grandmother will be assigned a black identity. In Latin America, to oversimplify a complex situation, there is a continuum of racial categories and often only people who look quite African in appearance will be identified as black; people of evidently more mixed ancestry will often be classed by a variety of terms denoting a position between black and white (Wade, 1997, p. 14).

The politics of *mestizaje* had profound consequences for the racial identification of the Mexican population. A recent survey conducted in five Latin American countries (PERLA project) (Telles, 2014) showed that many Mexicans identify themselves with a white identity, even when they are not in positions of social or economic privilege. (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014).

Ethnic and racial categories are relative and contextual (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014). The school has played an important role in promoting a *mestizo* identity. The PERLA study showed that there is a close relationship between formal education and identification as *mestizo*, with a stronger trend in the central-western zone of the country, where Jalisco is located. The *criollo* culture is stronger and the *mestizo* identity is merely cultural. ‘Indigeneity was considered to be only a cultural identity, which could be diminished or eliminated through behaviours like learning Spanish, wearing

Western clothes, and abandoning indigenous communities' (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014, p. 1158)

In Latin America, the term 'racism' is embedded in a history of exploitation and oppression towards indigenous and black populations, since the very beginning of the Spanish and Portuguese conquests. As Wade points out, during the colonial period 'the Spanish would have liked to maintain three separate categories: Spanish, Indians, and Africans: rulers, tributaries and slaves' (Wade, 1997, p. 27). As Gall (2004) argues, this was a type of racism that followed the 'logic of inequality' in which the group in power recognised the minorities as long as they were located at the lowest level of the productive relationship: as exploited or over-exploited. The logic of inequality and its racist expressions contradicted the logic of modernity, in which a liberal state would fight for the equality of rights for all citizens. Under this logic, 'other' identities would have to be subsumed in order to achieve a national identity. Martínez-Casas *et al.* (2014) argue that academics have paid little attention to how issues of phenotype and skin colour shape inter-ethnic relationships; racism in Mexico is not only a product of cultural differences, such as language, but physical characteristics that have been overlooked.

In the PERLA study, there was a significant finding:

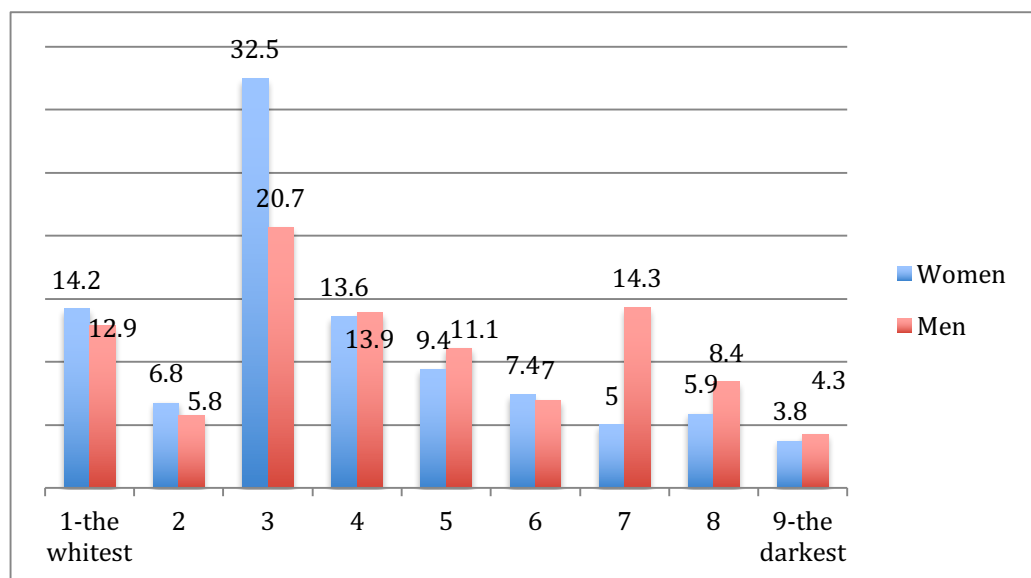
asking respondents if they considered themselves 'indigenous' produced one of the smallest population sizes (11.9%). Nevertheless, when we asked respondents about their identification based on their ancestors and customs, a surprisingly larger number identified as indigenous (19.4%) (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014, p. 1200).

The authors of the study argue that there was an 'ethnic explosion' that might be understood because:

The key difference is that questions that are based on more flexible criteria such as cultural traits might result in larger number of self-identified indigenous individuals than questions that are based on more static conceptions of ethnic membership (i.e., asking respondents if they 'are indigenous'). Indeed, [...] when the Mexican Census asked Mexicans if they considered themselves indigenous 'according to their culture', 14.9% of individuals responded affirmatively. This represents a 270% increase from the 2000 census, in which no references to culture were used (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014, p. 1200).

In a recent study conducted by CONAPRED (2010), people were surveyed about their perception of their skin colour, using a nine degree palette with one being the whitest and nine, the darkest. It was interesting to see how Mexican people, on average, positioned themselves among the three first colours of the palette, especially women, as shown in Figure 1.7. When people surveyed were asked about how they described their skin colour, 64.6% considered themselves as brown and 10.9% as white, while 28% of them indicated that people are treated differently because of their skin colour (CONAPRED & UNAM, 2010).

Figure 1.7. Perception of skin colour of Mexican population (CONAPRED & UNAM, 2010)



Another common manifestation of racism that prevails in Mexican society is the one that follows what Gall (2004) calls the 'logic of difference'. Under this logic, differences are acceptable, racism is not openly condoned, but minorities still experience exclusion and indifference (Gall, 2004).

Assimilationist policies have not been sufficiently questioned. Intellectuals and social advocates in Mexico consider that this is the most critical point to be addressed, in order to bring racism to an end in Mexico (Gall, 2004). Rizvi (1993) points out that contemporary popular racism is masked by egalitarian discourses and tied to 'common sense' which makes it seem 'natural' and, therefore, it is unchallenged.

Discourses that characterise indigenous identities as useful or valuable surface only occasionally and in particular social spaces. For example, while presenting oneself as indigenous may facilitate access to certain social programs (Martínez - Casas, 2010), this same identity could result in discrimination in other situations, such as when searching for jobs or trying to connect with non-indigenous social networks. For those who migrate to large cities or abroad, studies have found these individuals oftentimes over- or underemphasise their indigenous identity, depending on the situation (Martínez - Casas, 2007; Martínez Novo, 2006). In addition, complex relationships with an indigenous identity have been found to exist among members of so-called historical (primarily rural) indigenous communities, particularly among younger generations who have attended school (Martínez - Casas et al., 2014, p. 1118).

1.5 Aims, structure, and research questions

This study examines the schooling experiences of indigenous children in two urban schools in the State of Jalisco, Mexico. I try to understand the role of schools in mediating ethnic identity formation processes of indigenous children.

The research questions (RQ) that guided this study aim to understand:

RQ1: What are the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in Mexican schools, especially in terms of their ethnic identification?

RQ2: How do teachers understand cultural diversity, and how do they see their role in promoting or undermining the children's ethnicities?

Since I have spent several years now working on this document, I have come to reflect on the term 'immigrant indigenous children', which I used in my initial drafts of the thesis, as an inaccurate one. I realise now that most indigenous children who attend urban schools in Mexico are not necessarily immigrants; most of them were born in the cities and are children of indigenous immigrants. Naming them 'immigrants' in my research questions was exercising exclusion by labelling them as foreigners in the

context where they were born. My original research questions¹ were highly ambitious and in some ways biased by the way I saw things some years ago.

I consider it important to show these changes as a meta-analysis of my own research perceptions. I have come to realise that my original research questions were inaccurate in certain ways, as I was unable to see that indigenous children are no longer immigrants. Most of them were born in the city, and labelling them as migrants further entrenches their status as outsiders. It was also difficult to identify the strategies of the schools, since there were no explicit efforts as such. While there were approximations to the cultural diversity of the schools, they were not even close to recognising their need to respond to their multicultural composition. I, therefore, decided to construct my research questions more openly, letting the data speak for itself through the voices of the children.

By using an ethnographic approach, I addressed these research questions by placing indigenous children's voices at the centre of the research. This proposal is ethnographic because it aimed to observe and participate in the children's school environment in order to understand their own perspective. It also tried to observe to what extent the Mexican urban school recognise and value cultural differences and whether there are approaches that consciously or not, strengthen or limit the indigenous children's ethnic identities.

For the purpose of this ethnographic research, I concentrated on the state of Jalisco for two main reasons. Firstly, Jalisco is a state that has not given enough attention to indigenous issues in schools. It has not yet implemented any programme of Intercultural Bilingual Education and, a decade after I conducted my first fieldwork, it still struggles to recognise its multicultural composition. Secondly, gaining access to public schools in Mexico for research purposes is not an easy endeavour. It involves negotiating with people at different levels of the educational system, who are often reluctant to allow

¹ On April 2009 my main research question was: How do immigrant indigenous children understand their schooling experiences and how do schools respond to their needs? – Specific questions: 1. What are the processes of ethnic identity formation of young children in relation to 'otherness' in multicultural environments? 2. How do schools deal with cultural diversity, and which of the strategies are (in)effective in meeting the children's needs?, 3. How do indigenous children understand their interactions with their school environment and what are their responses to it?, 4. What forms of adaptation and resistance do indigenous children display within schools?

access to external individuals. My ethnographic work in Jalisco was conducted in collaboration with the Centre of Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS), a research institution with a longstanding relationship with the Ministry of Education in Jalisco and is the institution that conducted a research project on indigenous urban migration in three different states of the country in 2005-2008. Therefore, access to schools was granted through the permits already given to CIESAS. While CIESAS finished the project in 2008, I continued my fieldwork in the schools and I also stay on as a permanent member of the Seminar on Education, Indigenous and Ethnicity with CIESAS.

In order to respond to my research questions, I have divided the thesis into three sections. The first section consists of Chapter 1, 2, and 3, which explain the context and relevance of the research problem and the methodology and methods used. Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the research study. Chapter 2 offers a historical perspective on the situation of the indigenous peoples in Mexico, especially in the last decade, and the current educational approaches to deal with cultural diversity. Chapter 3 shows the methodology and methods followed, including the approach to collecting and analysing the data, as well as issues of ethics and reflexivity.

The second section addresses the first research question concerned with the process of identity formation of indigenous children. Chapter 4 is concerned with the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in relation to language use. Chapter 5 attempts to respond to the processes of ethnic formation in terms of the emotional habitus and cultural capital of indigenous children, highlighting the differences between the indigenous groups.

The third and last section addresses the second research question regarding the role of the teachers and the schools within this process of ethnic identity formation. Chapter 6 discusses the realities of indigenous children within the school setting, highlighting the emotional, individual, family and institutional habitus embedded in their experiences. This chapter also addresses the aspirational capital of indigenous children and the responses of the school system towards those aspirations. Chapter 7 talks about the teachers' understanding of cultural diversity, presenting the dynamics of the meritocratic and homogenising institutional habitus of the Mexican urban school and

the low expectations that most teachers have on poor and especially indigenous children. Lastly, Chapter 8 presents research conclusions and recommendations for policy makers, regarding the recognition of cultural diversity within the Mexican schools.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 Indigenous peoples in urban contexts

As the educational system is still unable to track the number of indigenous children in urban schools, there is an enormous under-representation in the official data. On the form that the Secretary of Education requires general schools to fill out at the end of the school year (Form 611), there is only one question regarding the total number of male and female indigenous students in the school (regardless of grade, age, origin, etc.). There is also a strong resistance to identifying indigenous students in the classrooms, which comes not only from the teachers, but also from the parents and children themselves, in an effort to avoid discrimination.

One of the few studies on discrimination and schooling in Latin America was conducted in 2005 by UNESCO (Hevia & Hirmas, 2005). The report comprises ethnographic cases from Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, focusing explicitly on discrimination and cultural pluralism in school settings. Across Latin American countries, the researchers found a wide gap between the discourse of equality and the recognition of cultural differences within the schools. They also found that the actual pedagogical practices were influenced by racial prejudices and stereotypes (Treviño, 2005). The Mexican case study analysed seven micro-ethnographies that were conducted both in majority indigenous rural settings and in rural schools where indigenous children were the minority. In both settings, the perception of the ‘others’ was based on dichotomies supported by socio-economic markers (rich and poor), phenotype (white, brown or black), geographical origin (urban-rural, centre-periphery), and the ethnic background of the students. It was also found that teachers (regardless of their ethnic background) held low expectations and condescending attitudes towards indigenous children, while valuing an urban and ‘western’ life as the one with more social prestige (Tovar & Avilés, 2005).

The conclusions drawn from the research project by UNESCO (Hevia & Hirmas, 2005) agreed that insufficient attention has been given to issues of racial discrimination in schools and that in order to promote truly democratic educational systems, further research at the local level is needed, in particular that which recognises the specific and

linguistic needs of the different indigenous groups (Barriga, 2008; Martínez - Casas, Rojas, Flores, Bayona, & Talavera, 2005).

2.1.1 Studies on indigenous children in urban schools

The first studies on indigenous migration to the cities were conducted by anthropologist Lourdes Arizpe in the seventies (Arizpe, 1975, 1978) in Mexico City, where she highlighted that indigenous peoples who migrate are part of a system of ethnic exploitation, by being part of the least productive sectors in the city.

While the last decade has seen an increase in academic studies, indigenous children's experiences in urban Mexican schools, is a field that has not been sufficiently explored (Bertely, Dietz & Díaz Tepepa, 2013). . Czarny and Martínez (2013) identified 13 master's degree theses and 10 doctoral theses, all of them from national universities, concerning issues of indigenous peoples, schools, and immigration. The authors also identified 9 books, 13 chapters, 6 journal articles, and 6 papers presented at conferences. Most of the research on urban indigenous children has been concentrated on Mexico City, Guadalajara, Pachuca, Puebla, Monterrey, and to a lesser extent on Veracruz, Chihuahua, San Luis Potosi, and Yucatan.

Research on discrimination issues in Mexico and other Latin American countries is very recent, relating to the constitutional reforms that took place during the 80s and 90s that advanced the recognition of indigenous cultures and languages. However, not enough effort has been put into understanding the new multicultural composition of the cities. There is insufficient research on the discrimination mechanisms and symbolic violence that operates at school level, and how these are re-produced in society as a whole. There is almost no Latin American literature on how indigenous children understand their own ethnic identities and those of 'others' different to them. In Mexico, María Bertely (1998) conducted one of the first studies concerned with addressing issues of discrimination within urban schools in Mexico City. The findings from the school in question, of which 45% of the children were considered to be indigenous, indicated that teachers did not know the ethnic origins of the children, while the children themselves avoided speaking their indigenous languages (Bertely, 1998). In 2006, Bertely conducted another research study with illiterate and monolingual Zapotecos living in

Mexico City. Her conclusions highlighted the complexities of the social networks they build with other Zapotecos with higher schooling levels, in order to navigate the urban system (Bertely, 2006a).

Similar findings have been drawn from studies conducted in the cities of Mexico, Monterrey, and Guadalajara. In Mexico City, the indigenous group that has been most studied, is the Otomi (Czarny & Martínez, 2013). Barriga (2008) conducted a study in an urban school in Mexico City and found that parents encouraged their children to use only Spanish in public spaces, in order to adapt more smoothly to the city and avoid discrimination. Barriga (2008) argues that there is no bilingual or intercultural perspective in practice, and the result is the invisibility of indigenous children in urban schools. From her research study in the centre of Mexico City, Miguez (2008) also highlighted the importance of conducting bilingual diagnosis to respond to the needs of indigenous children.

Another study on the schooling experiences of Otomi children in urban schools in the centre of Mexico City was conducted by Nicanor Rebolledo (2007). The author also identified experiences of discrimination and lack of capacity in the schools to respond to the cultural diversity. This research highlighted the importance of not referring to urban indigenous peoples as ‘immigrants’, but as ‘original peoples’ to avoid discrimination (Rebolledo, 2007). A similar study found that physical and symbolic discrimination (individual, institutional, and structural) is occurring in public schools against both indigenous children and also against non-indigenous children, on the basis of social class (Mendoza, 2009).

Similarly, Gabriela Czarny analysed the cultural and ethnic identities of the Mazahua and Triqui communities (Czarny, 1995, 2008, 2010) in Mexico City. She argued that current educational policies still work as mechanisms of integration and *mestizaje*. Even within the current policies of intercultural bilingual education (EIB), there are mechanisms of exclusion operating against indigenous populations in urban schools (Czarny, 2010). Emiko Saldivar (2006) also provided a strong critique of the multicultural approach of current educational policies, reporting that these approaches have failed to unveil issues of racism and discrimination (Saldivar, 2014).

In 1999 in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, the Ministry of Education created the Department of Indigenous Education (DEI). This was an innovative and progressive practice for a state that has no original indigenous populations. However, it was found that responding to the needs of indigenous children depended on the awareness of teachers and principals to request help (Durin, 2005). Indeed, the DEI only provided educational services to schools after they had asked for attention and support. As paying attention to the needs of indigenous children has not been a mandatory requirement in education policy, it has been difficult for the DEI to negotiate access to schools where principals are not willing to cooperate (Durin, 2005).

Nuevo Leon has been one of the first states that attempted to address the linguistic needs of indigenous children. In 2000, the local Congress approved an amendment to the education law in response to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the indigenous groups, by providing intercultural and bilingual education programmes. The research conducted by Durin (2005) showed that innovative practices (although still limited and insufficient) had a positive impact on indigenous children's adaptation to urban schools.

School staff had difficulties in determining whether a child had a cognitive or physical problem or whether s/he was a non-Spanish speaker. Durin (2005) reports an incident where a first-year teacher thought that one of her students had a hearing disability. The girl cried every time the teacher and the principal talked to her and she was silent during classes. In order to identify the cause of the problem, the teacher and the principal asked the girl to face the wall and called her name to see whether she was able to hear or not. They realised that the child was not deaf but she did not speak any Spanish, she was a Nahuatl speaker. They contacted an older brother in the school and used him as a translator to encourage the girl to speak and express her feelings. This is an example in which, regardless of the lack of resources to diagnose the sociocultural background of the students, some teachers and administrators are sensitive to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of their student population. However, as noted in other research projects, this is not always the case in Mexican urban schools (Barriga, 2008; Czarny, 2008; Rebolledo, 2007; Saldívar, 2006).

One of the main successes during the implementation of the Intercultural Bilingual programmes in 63 schools with indigenous populations was the focus on, and valuing

of, indigenous children's narratives. In 1999, indigenous children were asked to write a narrative about their own traditions in their communities of origin for a state-wide contest. Some indigenous children, who were born in Nuevo Leon, became interested in knowing more about their communities of origin in order to write about them. Eight indigenous children won the contest and were given public recognition in the state and at a national level. This situation motivated non-indigenous children to learn indigenous languages and increased motivation in schools to identify the children who spoke an indigenous language. Indigenous children showed more confidence speaking in the classroom despite their parents' advice not to use indigenous languages in public spaces (Durin, 2005).

A further innovation in Nuevo Leon was that the educational authorities decided to hire indigenous teachers from other states to teach indigenous languages to both indigenous and non-indigenous children in the 63 schools. In 2003, they hired seven teachers whose languages were the most represented in the state. They started developing teaching materials and helped the educational authorities to identify more indigenous children in other schools. When the DEI started their efforts to identify indigenous children in 1998, they detected 283 children in five schools. In 1999, they had identified 600 and by the end of 2005, the number had increased to approximately 1000 children (Durin, 2005).

Although further research is needed to evaluate the impact of this educational strategy, ethnographic data drawn from Durin's study (2005) shows that there has been a linguistic revitalisation in the schools and that discussing and reflecting on discrimination issues has become a part of language lessons. In addition, teachers, principals, and non-indigenous students have shown more interest in indigenous languages and traditions. However, there are still many challenges that have to be overcome. Seven teachers were inadequate to cover all the schools and classrooms. In the school year 2003-2004, they were only able to teach, on average, one indigenous language subject per class. Teachers were hired for three-month contracts and were not given sufficient incentive to stay on in the project. Furthermore, some of these teachers came from rural and indigenous communities where teacher training differs. As a consequence, they could not be offered better positions in the salary scheme and had to follow in-service teaching programmes. Another challenge that emerged has been the

negotiation process in schools. Language teachers have had to negotiate access to the schools and have come up against resistance and lack of interest in certain schools. The response from schools has been variable: some teachers consider the Intercultural Bilingual Education to be unhelpful, while others have requested more support to implement it in their classrooms (Durin, 2005).

2.1.2 Studies on indigenous children in urban schools in Jalisco

In the state of Jalisco, several research studies were conducted between the years of 2005 and 2010. In contrast to the experience in Nuevo Leon, strong resistance to identifying indigenous students emerged, not only from teachers, but also from the parents and children in order to avoid discrimination (Martínez - Casas, 2007; Martínez - Casas & De la Peña, 2004; Martínez - Casas, Rojas, Bayona, Flores, & Talavera, 2004). Mixteco children were found in special education institutions taking classes along with children with brain damage or Down's syndrome (Martínez - Casas et al., 2005). For some teachers (those who were aware of the presence of indigenous children in their schools), indigenous languages were considered a major factor in academic failure and the main cause of student drop out. Many indigenous children were not completely bilingual and gave more importance to speaking Spanish than their mother tongue. Their competence in each language was also different and, therefore, the use of their own language was restricted to private spaces. Some indigenous children preferred to remain anonymous in the classroom until they became proficient in Spanish. This situation appeared to be more prevalent in schools where principals, teachers, and non-indigenous children made discriminatory comments about indigenous languages and traditions (Saldívar, 2014). Through practices such as these, schools contribute to the loss of indigenous languages and value systems. Teachers not only have an influence on the linguistic identity and self-esteem of indigenous immigrant children, but they also contribute to the children's compliance with hegemonic models sometimes to the detriment of their own languages and traditional knowledge (Martínez - Casas et al., 2005).

Indigenous parents have mixed feelings regarding their children's schooling. On the one hand, schools are considered important for getting the necessary skills to navigate the urban system and to get along with the *mestizo* groups. On the other hand, schools are

considered a dangerous influence that threatens indigenous traditions. As a consequence of this perception, some Mixteco families prefer not to send their daughters to school to prevent them from being discriminated against. Further to this, parents also consider schools as bad influences on their children's speech, dress code and the types of entertainment that their children become attracted to (Martínez - Casas et al., 2005).

In a highly impoverished neighbourhood in Guadalajara, there is an Otomi settlement from Santiago de Mezquitán, Querétaro. Otomi indigenous groups are dedicated to commerce activities and sell potatoes chips. Otomi boys and girls start working at a very early age and their developmental stages are not similar to those that are marked by the official school. The level of responsibility that children have within their cultural group contradict the responsibilities a child is expected to have within the dominant culture (García Guevara & Martínez Carvajal, 2013). Children sell a diversity of products in the informal market and among Otomi families, the income generated by children represents 25% of family earnings. Other groups, such as the Mixtecos, are musicians and play in several parts of the Mexican territory. Indigenous parents consider child labour not only as a monetary necessity but also as an educational process in which children learn the skills that schools do not provide. Among different ethnic groups such as Otomis, Purepechas, and Mixtecos, there are different training processes in which children acquire more responsibility over time. Otomi and Purepecha children, for instance, start selling products on the streets between the ages of 9 and 10 accompanied by their parents. Once they reach the age of 12, they choose their own selling point and work independently (Martínez - Casas et al., 2005). There is a similar pattern among indigenous Mazahuas in Mexico City (Oehmichen, 2001).

The level of responsibility the children acquire at work is directly associated with their attendance at school. It is common that children attend the schools closest to their selling points, rather than to their homes. Furthermore, they usually attend the afternoon and night shifts since many of them devote their mornings to their commercial activities. Most commonly, indigenous children enter primary school at an average age of 8. Once they have achieved a sufficient level of literacy (when they are in third grade, because usually they finish first grade without reading and writing) they start gaining more responsibilities at work and school stops being a priority (Martínez - Casas et al., 2005).

Child labour represents an enormous challenge for an educational system that penalises the combination of school and work. However, indigenous children are used to combining labour responsibilities with schooling. Many of these children in their communities or origin help daily in domestic chores before and after attending school. In the lives of these families, the support of all the members is indispensable for the wellbeing of the group. Schools, however, are not designed to facilitate the relationship between school and work and, therefore, oblige indigenous children and families to make choices that seriously affect the children's school attendance. Informal commerce on the streets is also a source of discrimination and conflict; it is a point of struggle for indigenous and non-indigenous peoples competing for clients, products, and strategic selling points (Oehmichen, 2001)

Angelica Rojas (2006) argues that there is a cultural re-signification among Otomi groups in Guadalajara, under the notion of 'moral communities'. Martínez-Casas and Rojas (2006) analysed the mathematical knowledge of Otomi children in their selling of crafts, contrasting this with the maths skills taught at school. They highlight the negotiations that children make to integrate their familiar, commercial, and school contexts (Czarny & Martínez, 2013). Schools have not recognised this type of knowledge. Moreno-Medrano argues that,

The history of colonialism in Mexico and most Latin American countries still has a strong impact on people's lives. The wounds of the past including abuse, religious and cultural impositions, and Western social practices, still profoundly influence the present. Little has been said about the consequences of colonialism in children's lives: how do we relate their voices to a history of cultural imposition? What are the new post-colonial impositions that children face in their daily lives? (Moreno-Medrano, 2016, p. 105)

Ivette Flores (2007), in a research study on literacy skills of indigenous children found that there are no substantial differences between the reading abilities of indigenous and non-indigenous children between third and sixth grade. However, there is a profound belief among the teachers that indigenous children have lower achievement rates than non-indigenous children, even when there is no evidence to support it.

Romero and Moreno-Medrano (Romero & Moreno-Medrano, 2014) conducted a linguistic analysis of the narratives of indigenous and *mestizo* children in Guadalajara, using the data I collected in 2007. We found that the narrative fluidity of indigenous children was higher (.64) than *mestizo* children (.43). Indigenous children needed less guidance to narrate than *mestizo* children, maybe as an inheritance of their great oral traditions. Indigenous children also showed more independence and collaboration to narrate, which means that the children and interviewer exchanged ideas and points of view during conversation more often than *mestizo* children. Another interesting finding was that indigenous children's communities of origin and the life in the city were referred to more often through the use of adverbs 'here' (in the city) and 'there' (the community of origin) by indigenous children than *mestizo* children. They are embedded within two different cultural codes and they develop a special way to compare and contrast them both.

There have been other research projects on indigenous migration and education in other states such as San Luis Potosí (Chávez, 2010, 2014), where Monica Chavez studied the familiar and identity dynamics of Tenek and Nahuas youth. In Yucatan (López, 2011), Ricardo Lopez analysed how Maya professionals used their educational capital as a political strategy (Czarny & Martínez, 2013). In Veracruz, Laurentino Lucas (Lucas, 2007, 2010) conducted two studies on primary and tele-secondary schools with Totonaca and *mestizo* children to see the changes in their identities from a post-colonial perspective. Duran (2011) also studied the processes of adaptation of indigenous migrants in the city of Xalapa to highlight the importance of the social networks during this process.

In the state of Puebla, where there is a large population of Nahuas, the work of Rossana Podesta (2007) and Elizabeth Martinez Buenabad (2008) has been ground breaking on a national level because of its innovation on children's authorship. Rossana Podesta (2007) used visual methodologies with indigenous children to highlight how they have an enormous knowledge on environmental and agricultural matters in comparison to their non-indigenous counterparts. On the other hand, Martínez Buenabad, also recognised the asymmetrical relationships within urban schools where indigenous children experienced discrimination and ethnic blindness (Martínez Buenabad, 2008).

According to the UNESCO report on discrimination in Latin American schools, teachers have lower expectations for indigenous than for non-indigenous children. Even though they defend an egalitarian discourse of equality and reject discriminatory attitudes, they see indigenous children as timid, less capable of dealing with academic tasks and less focused on their overall academic performance (Giménez, 1999, 2005).

Discrimination and racism are a common topic in the research concerning indigenous children in urban settings. Many of the findings highlight the importance of social networks (*paisanaje*) in supporting the hostilities and exclusion that indigenous peoples experience (Czarny & Martínez, 2013). Czarny and Martínez-Buenabad argue that

School and its hierarchical epistemology compete with the hierarchical communitarian logic, where being someone who is recognised is not a synonymous with having degrees and schooling credentials (my translation Czarny & Martínez, 2013, p. 273).

The findings of this previous research suggest the need to understand and improve the mechanisms in which schools are responding to the needs of indigenous children in urban schools. My research seeks to understand whether or not schools are promoting the recognition of cultural differences in order to strengthen the processes of identity formation of indigenous children.

Most studies on indigenous migration to the big cities show the need of these groups to look for better life opportunities, as a consequence of the deep crisis of the Mexican countryside. In addition to this, the violence and drug wars in the country for more than a decade have created a diaspora within the most vulnerable groups of the country. Many indigenous groups hold the expectation that higher levels of schooling for their children will translate into better labour opportunities in the future. However, as shown in the statistics, this is not always the case. While indigenous peoples may be reaching higher levels of schooling, their economic conditions have not improved significantly (Flores, 2015). On the contrary, they are living a negation of their identity on two sides: they are not farmers anymore and nor are they part of the formal labour force of the cities (Soto, 2016) .

The main reason why indigenous parents send their children to school is so that they become literate in Spanish. In fact, some indigenous parents have shown resistance to

the implementation of bilingual programmes in schools. According to Martinez-Casas *et al.* (Martínez - Casas et al., 2005) indigenous families value education for three reasons:

1. Education is a means for generational change and social mobility;
2. Education is a defence mechanism against the abuses of mainstream society;
3. Education is an opportunity for acquiring a set of cultural skills in order to reassert their own identity.

Czarny uses the term ‘diaspora’ to talk about the extra-territoriality of indigenous communities. She argues, in a similar way to Bertely, that ‘the ways of community life in the city orient the school processes and the purposes of schooling’ of indigenous populations (Czarny & Martínez, 2013, p. 269).

2.2 ‘Intercultural education for all...’

One of the main concerns of educational systems around the world has been the provision of quality education in multicultural settings. However, educational policies are dictated by international organisations, such as the OECD, whose priorities are measured by academic standards so that students can compete in a more demanding globalised world. Developing cultures and responding to specific needs of social groups has not been addressed by these educational agendas. Schmelkes (2001) argues that the main challenge of education, nowadays, is to overcome two types of asymmetries: the academic and the valuative. Although both of these are interrelated, the former is focused on reducing achievement gaps, dropout rates and ensuring completion. The latter, on the other hand, is concerned with the values system embedded in educational systems and how they deal with issues of discrimination and racism within schools.

Scholars in different countries have tried to understand issues of discrimination and racism against minority students by using diverse theoretical frameworks, some of them more critical than others, including critical race theory (US and Canada), anti-racist education (UK) and intercultural education (Latin America and Spain). Mexico and other Latin American countries have implemented an intercultural and bilingual education approach since the 80s (Barnach-Calbó, 1997; Fornet-Betancourt, 2000; García Canclini, 2004; López, 1998; Moya, 1997; Zimmermann, 1997). Intercultural

education seeks to transcend the notion of cultural co-existence advocated in multicultural education to one that privileges the relationship of respect and equality among different cultures (Schmelkes, 2004).

Multicultural and intercultural education has profound differences mainly around issues of rights recognition and equal relationships between majority and minority groups, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Differences between multicultural and intercultural education

Multicultural education	Intercultural education
Emphasis on recognition of different cultures	Emphasis on relationships among different cultures
Based on values of tolerance and ‘political correctness’ – relativist politics of respect	Based on values of equality and respect
Indifference and segregation	Mutual understanding and integration
Cultural diversity as a limitation for policy implementation	Cultural diversity as a pedagogical advantage
Does not challenge structural inequalities	Structural inequalities are challenged at the school level
Does not take into account power dynamics	Power asymmetries acknowledged in the relationships between minority and majority groups
Celebrates cultural diversity as ‘folklore’	Celebrates cultural diversity as a gradual process from knowing the contributions of different cultures to valuing, understanding, and respecting differences

Intercultural education is supposed to be directed at all Mexican citizens with the objective of overcoming discriminatory and racist attitudes (Schmelkes, 2001). In Mexico, intercultural bilingual education has three main objectives:

1. To achieve the national objectives of basic education among indigenous children;
2. To achieve oral and written fluency in each child’s indigenous language and Spanish;
3. To know and value one’s own culture as well as to know and respect the other cultures that make up our nation.

Furthermore, intercultural education directed at non-indigenous populations seeks to:

1. Know the cultural contributions of the various ethnic groups that constitute the national territory;
2. Recognise the value of these contributions and, therefore, respect and appreciate different people and cultural groups. As an ultimate goal, all Mexicans should value diversity, considering themselves fortunate for living in a multicultural society, and finding in it their essential source of personal and cultural enrichment.

Intercultural education in Latin America is not only an educational policy, but a political project that has been part of indigenous movements and demands since the 1950s (Gustafson, 2002). Indeed, although the rhetoric of cultural diversity in Latin America has developed substantially over the last decades, I would argue that this has not sufficiently addressed the problems of racism and discrimination against indigenous peoples and nor has it promoted an agenda of their political recognition. The implementation of intercultural education has been rather weak, and its acceptance among teachers has been widely contested. Several factors might be influencing the weak implementation of an intercultural education approach, among which are the lack of public resources and poor teacher training. However, the inability to address issues of discrimination against indigenous peoples within the educational system and recognise the existence of prejudice and stereotyping within the Mexican society as a whole, will further delay the implementation of intercultural education or any other educational policy intended to address social inequalities (Dietz, 2003).

2.3 Identities and schooling

Studies on identity have gained importance over the last three decades, influenced by psychological, sociological, anthropological, and cultural studies approaches (Archer, 2003; Hall, 1996; Holland & Lachicotte Jr., 1998; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002; Reay, 2010; Youdell, 2006). Each discipline is characterised by its own conceptualisations and methodologies. While most of them are complementary, substantial differences do exist between them. One way to examine these variations is to review the North American and British tradition of sociological thought.

The sociological North American tradition is concerned with the human agency of individuals and their role in the world as social actors. For instance, based on the socio-historical psychology of Vygotsky and the semiotic and critical theory of Bakhtin, Holland *et al.* (1998) suggest that identities should be studied in relation to social practices, since they are situated in a specific socio-historical context. They, therefore, refer to ‘situated identities’ rather than ‘cultural identities’. This line of thought is highly influenced by the symbolic interactionism of G. H. Mead (1934) and Erving Goffman (Goffman, 1963). Holland *et al.* (1998) point out that identity is always mediated by agency, since the individual uses the cultural resources at hand to make sense of who they are. According to Holland *et al.* ‘people tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are. These self-understandings, especially those with strong emotional resonance for the teller, are what we refer to as identities’ (Holland, 1998, p. 3). This school of thought, although not denying the importance of the social forces of class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, focuses more on the internal processes (the ‘inner activity’ and ‘inner life’) of the individual in developing her/his identity (Holland, 1998, p. 8). As a result, this approach focuses on the individual’s reflective processes and on the mechanisms of internalisation that operate in the social life of individuals, as well as in the formation of her/his subjectivities.

This line of thought has influenced the work of many Mexican researchers in the fields of sociology and anthropology of education (Paradise, 1987, 1994; Paradise & Robles, 2016; Robles & Czarny, 2003) , as well as others who have incorporated cultural and psychoanalytical elements into their research approach (Bertely, 2000; Rockwell & Ezpeleta, 1983).

In my opinion, this symbolic interactionist approach assumes that every individual has an already-developed reflexivity and that she/he is able to act freely and responsibly according to her/his social position in the world. It is assumed that the individual acts and perceives reality in conscious ways. However, this fails to take into account the social, political, and economic forces that influence, in unconscious ways, how the individual sees the world and her/his position in it (Archer, 2003; Reay, 2006) . In the case of my research, I realised that when people are living in poverty, there is little time

for reflection unless processes of this nature are promoted in other social spaces (political, educational, or religious organisations). Time for reflection seems to be the privilege of the middle-and upper-classes (when they opt for it). As Skeggs asserts: ‘the ability to be reflexive via the experience of others is a privilege, a position of mobility and power, a mobilization of cultural resources’ (Skeggs, 2004, p. 129). In the schooling experience of these children, the school does not seem to promote reflective processes of this kind and parents seem to be very busy with activities that will enable them to meet the basic needs of their families. In this sense, the work of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1991; Bourdieu, Passeron, Nice, & Bottomore, 1990), Hall (1996) and Fanon (1961) provides a more generative analytical framework for studying the processes of identity formation within the contexts of cultural minorities in decolonising contexts.

A different approach to the study of identity has emerged from the British tradition of sociological thought. The social constructionism approach of Stuart Hall was developed in the 1990s within the framework of critical cultural studies and feminism, and the overall influence of psychoanalysis within social sciences, in which the power of the unconscious and subjectivity played an important role (Hall, 1996). Hall uses identity ‘to refer to the meeting point, the point of suture, between, on the one hand, the discourses and practices which attempt to “interpellate”, speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities’ (Hall, 1996, pp. 5-6).

Hall’s definition of cultural identity is closely related to the concepts of social representation and identification. According to Hall, representation is ‘how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves’ (Hall, 1996, p. 4). It is a social act in which the individual is defined not only by her/himself but also by other social actors. On the other hand, identification is more of an internal activity. Hall suggests that identification is ‘constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal, and the natural closure of solidarity and allegiance established on this foundation’ (Hall, 1996, p. 3). Following his definition that identification promotes solidarity and commitment to a person, group or ideal, we can also affirm that identification allows us to see some of the values that gives sense to the life of the individual. This is especially

important in a study of the processes of identity formation of children, since they are constantly learning from, and identifying with, different and often contradictory models: their parents, teachers, TV characters, political leaders, neoliberal discourses, etc.

In addition to the concepts of representation and identification, Hall (1996) considers power and the recognition of differences as lying at the centre of the definition of identity. He suggests that identity is constructed through the recognition of differences and within specific power relations, and cannot be detached from debates on the specific historical contexts that are affecting populations and cultures, especially those in the post-colonial world. It is within these discourses that Hall's ideas have had a great impact and influence upon the politics of the identity movement.

I refer to processes of identity formation following Hall's idea that identity is a concept 'under erasure' (Hall, 1996, p. 2), that is constantly being contested and relentlessly changing. Summing up the concept of identity and the different approaches, I define identity as a process of representation and identification that is framed around social discourses and dynamics of power. Identity is a dynamic, fluid and occasionally contradictory process that is constructed collectively and individually, consciously and unconsciously, in a specific field of practice.

Youdeell uses the concept 'constellations of identities' (2006, p. 178), suggesting that the relationships between ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and disability have different levels of interaction in different discursive fields. Although this concept is useful to represent how these factors play an important and interwoven role in the construction of identities, it does not sufficiently explain how those interactions take place in the field.

Ivey Ken offers an interesting and analytically challenging concept through the metaphor of sugar. Ken considers race, class, and gender to be mixed in the way sugar is 'produced, used, experienced, and processed in our bodies' (Ken, 2008, p. 152). According to Ken, they are intertwined in ways that come to be our own sources of oppression or privilege. These insights have influenced the data analysis of this thesis, as will be shown in the next chapter. Considering identities as complex interactions

within different social dimensions provides a more comprehensive picture in the study of ethnic identities in Mexico and Latin America.

2.4 Identities and territory

In Mexico, during the 60s and 70s, anthropological studies explained the rural-urban migration phenomenon as due mainly to socioeconomic factors: poverty, industrialisation, population growth, etc. Sociocultural factors and other markers of difference such as ethnicity and culture were absent from the debate (Oehmichen, 2005). It was not until the 80s that cultural and social identities were considered in the analysis of the migration phenomena, especially in relation to indigenous cultures (Oehmichen, 2005).

When studying identities of indigenous peoples in Latin America, notions of territory play a crucial role. Indigenous immigrants move from a territory to another in search of better life opportunities. Indigenous migrants are a group that is recognised as members of the nation, but they lack specific rights. They live in the cities, but are threatened to go back to their communities of origin. They have free transit, but their presence in the cities is a source of conflict (Czarny & Martínez, 2013, p. 272). Gilberto Giménez talks about the dimensions of identity and the relationship with the notion of territory. Indigenous peoples experience identities in opposition: they experience a dichotomy between living an ideal of urban progress and, at the same time, feeling ‘backward’ because of their agricultural background (Giménez, 1999, 2003, 2005). Indigenous identities are embedded in processes of socio-territorial attachment and belonging (Czarny, 2008). They are communities in diaspora or in exile (Oehmichen, 2005).

Bartolome (1997) argues that the process of identity formation is always relational. It is through consciousness of differences that identities are built. He argues that

The way in which ‘others’ are perceived will be conditioned by the way in which ‘we’ are perceived. A positive self-conceptualisation will both positively and negatively influence the perceptions of others. In both cases, those who are different to the social “we” will be seen as inferior, equal or superior, respectively. This is a dialectical relationship, since the self-image will depend on a specific history of ethnic interaction, generally

conditioned by the power positions of the articulated groups (my translation of Bartolome, 1997, p. 78)

Ethnic identities cannot be separated from the way cultures are organised. Ethnic groups share cultural elements that make them unique and, therefore, create and recreate their own social spaces (Bartolome, 1997). In most Mesoamerican indigenous traditions, the language, shared history, community affiliation, way of life, cosmology, and attachment to land create very well defined ideological representations (Bartolome, 1997). This identification is what allows these cultural and social groups to build their mechanisms of resistance or counterhegemonic movements, that Bartolome calls a 'culture of resistance, understood as a battle in favour of a set of cultural referents that a society assumes as fundamental for its identity configuration within a certain moment of its historical process' (my translation of Bartolome, 1997, p. 79). It is within these daily struggles for resistance that many indigenous movements around the globe have taken centuries to defend their demands, sometimes in autonomous and silenced ways, like the EZLN in Mexico.

How then does one approach the study of identity formation within this context?

Bartolome (1997) reflects on the role that the contemporary ethno-political movements have had in recent years, as their demands configure ethnic identities:

- Language
- Territory
- Clothing
- Way of life
- History
- Economic system
- Parental definition
- Political participation

As will be analysed in the following chapter, many of the analytic codes in the children's interviews coincide with these demands that configure the cultural capital of indigenous peoples.

Defining ethnicity is a difficult task. Balslev and Gutierrez (2008:7) argue that in order to understand the concept of ethnicity, we must consider four elements:

- a. Its relationship with the notion of cultural differences, always in a dialectic movement between similarities and differences.
- b. Its relationship with the concept of culture, shared meanings and social interactions.
- c. Its constantly changing and negotiated meaning that has been produced and reproduced within specific historical situations.
- d. Its collective and individual nature not only expressed by social interactions but also internalised in the form of self-identifications.

These four elements comprise the construction of a social identity. Ethnic identity is part of the social identity and it refers to the subjective self-perception of the ethnic groups (Giménez 1994 in Oehmichen, 2005:65). The ethnic groups perceive themselves as different by arguing cultural differences such as language, religion, race, etc. (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008:8).

Gutierrez (2008) argues that the ethnic identity is concerned with two conditions: first, one must **have the desire** to be part of a cultural group in a physical, symbolic or spiritual manner; and second, these groups must be **organised** to advocate their demands in the presence of dominant groups. In this way, ethnic identity not only has an individual element of choice, but also a collective and political element of belonging to a wider group. Gutierrez (2008:21) suggests that the ethnic identity is created in three dimensions:

1. **Subjective dimension:** the consciousness of being part of an ethnic group, or a common territory with similar cultural values.
2. **Collective dimension:** the awareness of identifying oneself with a group.
3. **Structural dimension:** social, economic, and political characteristics.

In order to see how these dimensions interplay within Bourdieu's theory of practice, I also analysed children's data by looking at habitus, capital, and field.

2.5 Bourdieu's conceptual framework in the study of identities

Bourdieu's theories have been highly influential in the study of identities and their relationships to many types of inequalities (gender, social class, race, etc.). Several researchers in the field of education have used Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field as powerful analytical tools to frame their research (Connolly, 1998; Laureau, 2000, 2003; Reay, 2004a, 2004b; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013). However, Wacquant (2014) argues that is not the triplet (nor 'trilogy') of habitus, capital, and field that makes the Bourdieu's conceptual framework useful and challenging, there are other concepts that are also equally powerful: *doxa*, symbolic power, and reflexivity.

2.5.1 Habitus

According to Bourdieu (1990), habitus is a product of the objective life conditions in early life, which frame the set of practices that are considered possible or unthinkable, acceptable or prohibited. Habitus surpasses the occasionally deterministic idea of reproduction, which gives little space for the individual to transform their lives. Habitus is a powerful analytical tool in the study of identities under asymmetrical conditions. As Reay succinctly argues: 'Habitus can be used to focus on the ways in which the socially advantaged and disadvantaged play out attitudes of cultural superiority and inferiority ingrained in their habitus in daily interactions' (Reay, 2004b, p. 436). . Habitus can be an effective tool to challenge racism and discriminatory practices that are sometimes unveiled within dominant societies.

The concept of habitus provides a strong analytical power to the processes of identity formation. Youdell argues that habitus imposes a 'set of truths and ways of being which the subject tacitly believes in and owns yet is unaware of in either inculcation or practice' (2006, p. 47). Culture is internalised by habitus and expressed through diverse social practices, beliefs, values, and knowledge that were historically constructed, constantly reproduced, and transformed (Oehmichen, 2005, p. 60). Oehmichen argues

that habitus are systems of durable dispositions of perception, interpretation and action (ibid). However, habitus is not only limited to cognitive functions of perception. One of the main aspects of habitus is that it is embodied and expressed by activities such as walking, eating, or speaking in certain ways (Reay, David, & Ball, 2005).

Habitus is a dynamic that shows the fluidity of the individuals' choices in life by looking simultaneously at social structures and individual agency. Reay argues that habitus is the conceptual tool that Bourdieu uses to reconcile the dualisms of agency versus structure: 'According to Bourdieu it is through the workings of habitus that practice (agency) is linked with capital and field (structure)' (Reay et al., 2005, p. 22) . In this way, habitus can lead to different social practices, even within the same field, practices that be both either constraining or transforming (ibid, p.433). Habitus changes throughout life's trajectories, it is not an static concept learned only within childhood influences (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013).

The concept of habitus is 'multi-layered', and it is not only individually constructed, but is the product of 'a collective history of family and class that the individual is a member of' (Reay, 2004b). Habitus is the product of a colonial history too, which might be challenged and transformed by the agency of individuals and collectives in order to construct an additional layer of the present. Here is where schools become a crucial part in the construction of the most recent layer of the habitus: 'the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences... and so on, from restructuring to restructuring' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 134).

Laureau argues that habitus involves a sense of comfort in choices and attitudes in life, which have been learned during the socialisation processes since childhood. In Laureau's words 'socialization provides children, and later adults, with a sense of what is comfortable or what is natural (Bourdieu terms this *habitus*). These background experiences also shape the amount and forms of resources (*capital*) individuals inherit and draw upon as they confront various institutional arrangements (*fields*) in the social world' (A. Laureau, 2003, p. 275). It is possible for the individual to 'adopt new habits later in life, but these late-acquired dispositions lack the comfortable (natural) feel associated with those learned in childhood' (ibid, p. 277).

I have to admit openly that using habitus for my research analysis was a challenging endeavour. I questioned myself constantly about its effectiveness when analysing asymmetries between ethnic groups, especially because the concept was developed in France, a society with profound class differences and a significant colonial power. However, I realised that discriminatory practices are created precisely as a result of a collective habitus within these historical contexts, either in Europe or Latin America. Habitus is historical, 'it also insists that the world is not transparent to social agents; that they have followed a trajectory and occupy a location in a resilient distribution of efficient resources independent of their will and consciousness' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 131). The unequal distribution of resources in Latin America has resulted in discriminatory practices that were built collectively, and as Wacquant argues, 'there is an ethnic (local, regional, ethnolinguistic, ethnoreligious, ethnoracial, national, civilizational, etc.) habitus since each of these prevalent "containers" of social action making claim to collective honor tends to produce joint ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, and common sets of expectations' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 120). Habitus, in the context of Bourdieu, was also influenced by experiences of neocolonisation. As explained by Wacquant:

On the Algerian side, Bourdieu tracks down and highlights how variations in peasant social structure and trajectory, linked to the depth and length of penetration by colonial authorities and monetary relations, translates into variations in subjective conceptions of time, labor, and value, that is, variance in habitus that determine an opposition, within the same group, between 'empeasanted peasants' and 'dispeasanted peasants' as well as the emerging split between proletariat and subproletariat in the city (Wacquant, 2014, p. 127).

Habitus is therefore sometimes split, hybridised, and gender differentiated. Habitus became more than an analytical concept, but a possibility for change and a 'source of creativity'. Wacquant argues that 'to the degree that [a field] incorporates reflexive dispositions [...] and that these dispositions are applied to the agent's own thoughts, feelings, actions and surroundings, habitus can guide a form of *self-work*' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 122). Schools as powerful social fields, might be spaces of hope or resistance (Apple, 1995). As is discussed in later sections, Mexican schools have developed the habitus of *mestizaje*, obscuring ethnic differences among students since colonial times.

Habitus, therefore, it is a useful tool for ‘understanding how the structure of schooling shapes individual students’ social trajectories’ (Horvat & Earl, 2010, p. 2). Ingram uses the concept of “habitus tug” to explain:

The dialectical confrontation between habits and field results in a degree of accommodation where the habitus accepts the legitimacy of the new field’s structure and is structured by it, enabling a modification in the habitus. Yet the habitus is still constrained by the structuring forces of the field of origin. In this case the new habitus is made up of conflicting elements: the internalization of new experiences and schemes of perception can lead to the internalization of conflicting dispositions. This can be conceptualized as a “habitus tug”, where conflicting dispositions struggle for supremacy and the individual can at times feel pulled in different directions (2011, p. 290).

Connolly *et al.*, (2009) argue for the notion of ‘**ethnic habitus**’ based on the work of Bentley (1987) and Reay, David, and Ball (2005) defined as ‘representing the totality of social practices and cultural dispositions that are often taken-for-granted and that are generated by and become generative of the ethnic group to which the individual belongs’ (Connolly *et al.*, 2009, p. 220). This concept is especially useful for my research, as it helps to understand the process in which young children build their ethnicity, taking into account ‘their ethnic preferences, ethnic awareness, ethnic identities and ethnic prejudices’ (ibid, p. 223).

Other authors refer to a ‘**moral habitus**’ to make a distinction between the value codes of different cultural groups or individuals (Sayer, 2005). I argue that indigenous cultures have different understandings and ways of life than coloniser societies: most indigenous cultures share communal structures for managing resources, and a way of life that is based on collective values of sharing and collaboration (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013).

2.5.2 Field

There is a significant body of literature that analyses children’s identities in relation to their social and educational contexts (Archer, 2003; Archer & Francis, 2007; Arnot & Reay, 2007; Connolly, 1998; Francis, 1997a, 1997b; Skelton, 1996, 1997). These social and educational contexts are what Bourdieu calls ‘field’.

Field is the social setting where habitus operates: schools, classrooms, staff rooms, etc. (Reay et al., 2005). Shilling explains the concept of social field as ‘a patterned set of organizing forces and principles imposed on all those entering its parameters’ (Shilling, 2003, p. 476). Curriculum, educational reforms, educational programmes on intercultural education, and poverty reduction programmes are also sub-fields that I found within the schools. Each field possesses a relative autonomy from other fields, and is irreducible to the economy, refracting social forces and evaluating those within it according to its own internal structure or ‘rules of the game’ (Bourdieu 1992, p.98 in Shilling, 2003, p. 476). They are social spaces where ‘social agents compete for status within fields using various forms of capitals’ (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013, p. 693). Fields are places of struggle that are constantly negotiated and challenged by social agents, either consciously or unconsciously (Reay, 2004b; Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013).

Reay uses Bourdieu’s concepts of field and habitus and the dynamic relationship between them to explain how identities are constructed within different contexts. Field and cultural capital can be ‘utilized to better understand the differing experiences of different groups of pupils in the classroom’ (Reay, 2006). Different types of capital (cultural, social, economic and symbolic) are accessible to individuals to ‘make a difference to the choices and options available to them’ (Reay, 2010). According to Reay, some individuals have more fluid identities than others, depending on the field in which they are immersed and the capitals they possess. In addition to this, systems of inequalities exist according to race, ethnicity, sexuality, dis/ability, social class, and gender. As Reay argues, the psychic and emotional aspects of identity have been considered in recent studies to show the complexities within the formation of identities (ibid). As Reay cogently asserts: ‘The quandary for research on identities within education is how to maintain a reflexive and critical lens on identities and identifications within any one of the influential contexts for identity making without losing sight of the impact of other, often broader contexts such as the policy field, the nation-state and even the global arena’ (ibid, p. 5). That is the reason why in the Mexican context, the study of identities cannot be disassociated from the identification of racism and discrimination within the history of colonial encounters and their extrapolation within the school dynamics.

2.5.3 Capital

Connolly defines capital as ‘a range of scarce goods and resources which lie at the heart of social relations. The struggles over such resources provide the main dynamic through which social stratification and change can be understood’ (Connolly, 1998). Bourdieu’s concept of capital is ‘essentially a resource that serves to advance one’s position of status within a given context. Several kinds of resources are at play in shaping educational opportunities and outcomes: economic resources, social connections, cultural knowledge, and symbolic status’ (Lewis, 2005, p. 5). Cultural capital is a relational concept that coexists with economic capital (wealth that is either inherited or generated), social capital (family and social networks), and symbolic capital (personal qualities) (Reay et al., 2005, p. 21). I also include linguistic capital as part of the cultural capital, especially within the contexts of unequal ethnic relationships. Even though many indigenous languages are in a process of losing their force and this type of capital is not mobilised within urban schools, it is a capital that indigenous children have as a resource to understand their unique cultural world; it is way of understanding and feeling the world (*sentipensar*) (Esteva, 2015). Bartolome argues, on the same lines as Bourdieu, that ‘every indigenous is born with a “linguistic habitus”; however her/his capacity to compete in the linguistic market is very limited. In fact, the State does not provide a “market”, a potential space of consumption of native languages, since they are restricted to the communal fields and circumscribed to the oral limits’ (Bartolome, 1997, p. 82). This stigma might force some indigenous peoples to renounce their languages and avoid teaching them to their children. Many authors argue that losing a language cannot be equated to losing an identity (ibid); there are some indigenous groups who have renounced their languages in order to better navigate their current context, but they still consider themselves indigenous, with kinship and territory being their most important sources of capital (Bartolome, 1997).

The notion of cultural capital is important when trying to understand how the systems of inequality work. Lewis argues that

Capital is an important concept because it helps explain the mechanisms and processes whereby ‘meritocratic’ organizations like schools reproduce

social inequality... As an analytic tool, capital provides a way to understand how unequal social positions are reproduced in a manner that makes the inequality appear to be the result of meritocratic and democratic practices (Lewis, 2005)

Rosa Elena Duran and Lydia Raesfeld (2010) conducted a gender analysis of indigenous women in Pachuca, Hidalgo through the notions of institutionalised cultural and economic capital. What was evident in this study was that these women did not possess the type of capital required to navigate the economic system and that the institutional practices are working against their own interests.

Complementary to the concept of cultural capital, Yosso (2005) suggests the use of community cultural wealth, and among many other Critical Race theorists, identified six types of capital among minority groups in the US (Latino, Mexican, Chicanos, and African-American):

- **Aspirational capital:** the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers
- **Linguistic capital:** the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style
- **Familial capital:** the cultural knowledge nurtured among *familia* (kin) that carries a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition
- **Social capital:** networks of people and community resources. These peer and other social contacts can provide both instrumental and emotional support to navigate through society's institutions
- **Navigational capital:** skills for manoeuvring through social institutions
- **Resistant capital:** knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behaviour that challenges inequality

I would argue that indigenous populations also have an **ecological or territorial capital** that makes them highly literate in caring for, and administering of, natural resources, in a way that most urban populations are not capable of doing.

2.6 Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) was born within the field of legal studies in the United States in the 70s and since then has become a ‘theoretical, analytical, and conceptual frame that has garnered significant attention over the last two decades where issues of race and education are concerned’ (Howard & Navarro, 2016, p. 255). This approach challenges the multicultural education perspective where issues of race were not problematised within the educational curriculum or the school culture (Banks, 2004). In addition, scholars from a multicultural education perspective did not challenge the deficit perceptions around students of colour.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995, p. 52) argue that there are some common characteristics within the critical race movement that includes:

1. An assumption that racism is not a series of isolated acts, but is endemic in American life, deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically;
2. A call for a reinterpretation of civil-rights laws in light of its ineffectuality, showing that laws to remedy racial injustices are often undermined before they fulfil their promises;
3. A challenge to the ‘traditional claims of legal neutrality, objectivity, colour-blindness, and meritocracy as camouflages of the self-interest of dominant groups in American society’;
4. An insistence of subjectivity and the reformulation of legal doctrine to reflect the perspectives of those who have experienced and been victimised by racism first-hand;
5. The use of first-person accounts.

I find CRT an important framework to analyse racism against indigenous peoples in Mexico. CRT follows Wellman’s definition of racism understood as ‘culturally sanctioned beliefs which, regardless of the intentions involved, defend the advantages Whites have because of the subordinated positions of racial minorities’ (Wellman 1977 in Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995, p. 55). The dynamics of racial inequalities have been absent from the educational discourses and policies. Saldivar argues that ‘the

displacement of race by ethnicity and class has limited the understanding of race and racism, and when recognized, racial practices are often dismissed as isolated events and/or irrelevant to social justice' (Saldívar, 2014, p. 92). Multicultural and intercultural education in Mexico will continue to reproduce racial inequalities if they do not engage in discussing aspects of racism such as 'domination, inequality, and privilege' (ibid).

Critical Race Theory privileges the use of stories to 'to overcome ethnocentrism and the dysconscious conviction of viewing the world in one way' Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995, p. 57) in order to name 'one's own reality'. It is the objective of this thesis to give privilege to the voices of indigenous children, in order to understand their realities from their own perspectives, especially in relation to the discrimination they see or experience within the field of the urban school. Storytelling, as is common within many other minority groups, such as the African-American, is a pillar of indigenous peoples:

Historically, storytelling has been a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression. The story of one's condition leads to the realization of how one came to be oppressed and subjugated and allows one to stop inflicting mental violence on oneself (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995, p. 57).

The approach of CRT is similar to Freire's ideas that say that 'the oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom' (Freire, 2000, p. 29). Through naming one's own reality with stories can also have an effect on the oppressor (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995) who is very often unaware of his/her oppressing privileges.

According to Howard and Navarro (2016, p. 258) the application of CRT into educational research follows five principles:

1. Centrality of race and racism – All CRT research within education must centralise race and racism, including intersections with other forms of subordination, such as gender, class, and citizenship.
2. Challenging the dominant perspective – CRT research works to challenge dominant narratives and re-centre marginalised perspectives.

3. Commitment to social justice – CRT research must always be motivated by a social justice agenda.
4. Valuing experiential knowledge – CRT builds on the oral traditions of many indigenous communities of colour around the world. CRT research centres the narratives of people of colour when attempting to understand social inequality.
5. Being interdisciplinary – CRT scholars believe that the world is multidimensional, and similarly, research about the world should reflect multiple perspectives (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001).

The importance of valuing experiential knowledge is one of the pillars of this thesis, since for indigenous children in urban schools, traditional knowledge is a *subcultural capital* that is not translated into any benefits within the mainstream society. It is within this unequal power dynamic that speaking clearly about children's experiences of racism and discrimination is important to this research.

2.7 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to present the main theoretical concepts that serve as the analytical framework to understand children's data. Based on the Mexican research, conducted over the last few decades on indigenous children in rural and urban schools, it is evident that multicultural and intercultural education approaches have failed to strengthen indigenous children's identity (Dietz, 2003). In fact, it has resulted in indigenous children learning to navigate the education system by making themselves invisible. Given this context, I decided to incorporate within the study of ethnic identities the concepts of territory (Oehmichen, 2005), self-identification (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008) and indigenous political demands (De la Peña, 2006) into my studies of ethnic identities, within a context of racial inequalities embedded in the Mexican colonial history (Saldívar, 2014).

In order to unveil children's experiences of discrimination and racism, Bourdieu's logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1990) was also considered. The concepts of habitus, field, and

capital that were identified, have been especially useful in organising the data analysis within a framework of Critical Race Theory.

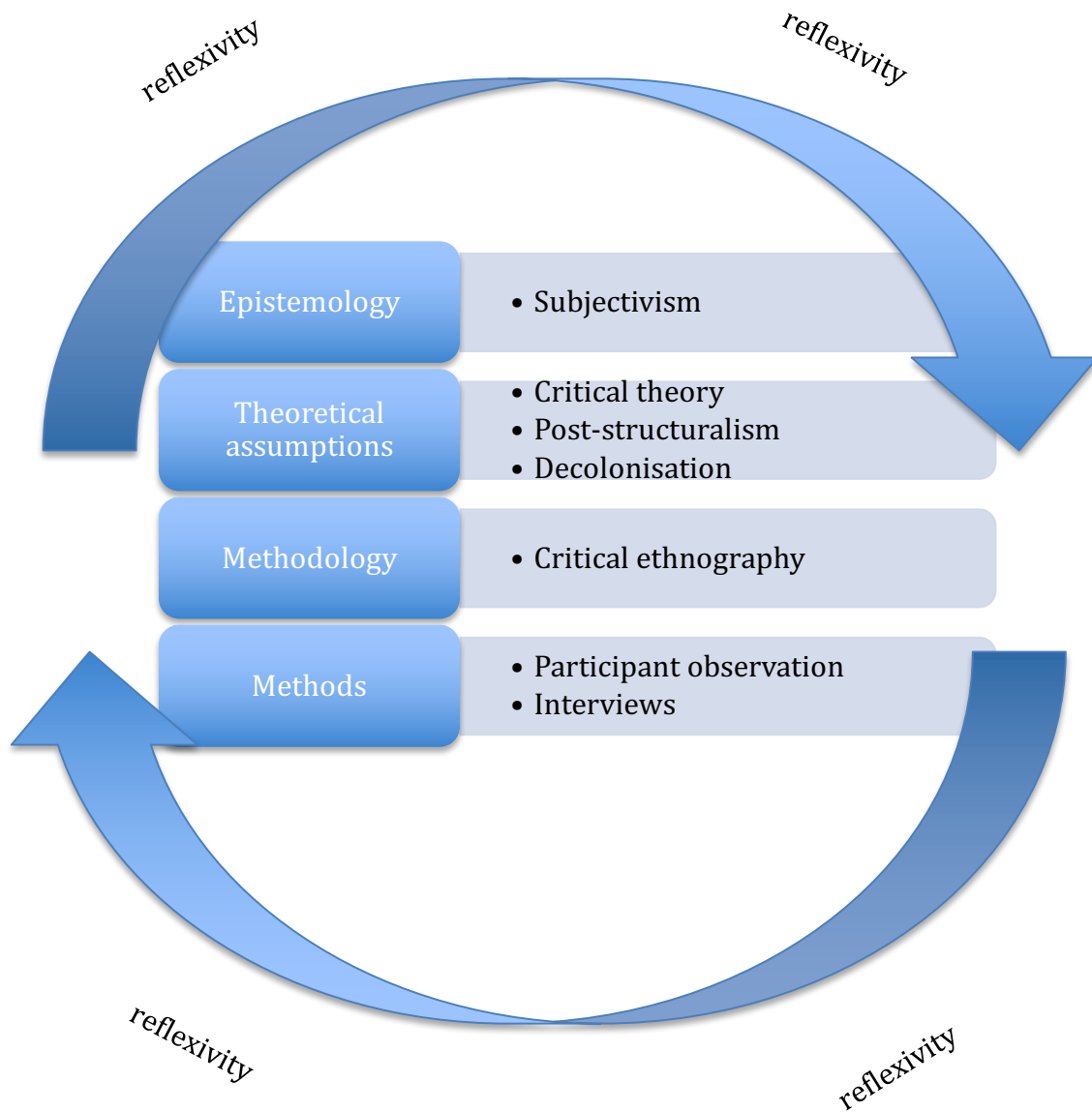
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological approach that informed this research project. Firstly, it explains the epistemological standpoint and theoretical perspectives that guided the design of the project: critical theory, post-structuralism, and decolonisation. Secondly, it portrays critical ethnography as the methodology adopted and the methods used for privileging children's voices. Thirdly, it describes the process of gaining access to schools and the selection process of participant children, explaining the negotiation process of reciprocity and the different stages of the data collection. Fourthly, it tries to systematise the process of data analysis, describing the different stages and approaches to triangulation, validity, and reliability within the research process. Finally, ethical implications and issues of reflexivity are considered in the context of working with young children from 'minorised contexts'.

3.1 Research Design

To illustrate the research design, I have used the model depicting the four elements of the research process suggested by Crotty (1998): epistemology, theoretical assumptions, methodology, and methods (Figure 8). From a subjectivist perspective, knowledge and meaning are conceived as socially constructed and negotiated (Howard & Navarro, 2016, p. 255; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). The epistemologies and theoretical assumptions that guided my experience in the field, and the process of data analysis, at least at a conscious level, were not only derived from existing theory, but also from my own understanding of the world. By doing this, I opened up a process in which my own subjectivity both informed and was informed by the research process, with all the personal transformations and contradictions that this process might bring. That is the reason why I have integrated a dynamic process of reflexivity into Crotty's model, as this element accompanied my choices and own definitions of epistemological and theoretical stances, as well as the methodologies and methods used during the research process.

Figure 3.1 The four elements of the research process
(adapted from Crotty, 1998)



Different authors use the term ‘paradigm’ or ‘theoretical perspective’ to refer to epistemological positions in social research (Crotty, 1998). In this thesis, I adopt a subjectivist approach within a critical theory framework, to expose the inequalities within urban schools attended by indigenous children. As Harvey argues, critical social research is ‘underpinned by a critical-dialectical perspective which attempts to dig

beneath the surface of historically specific, oppressive, social structures' (1990). As a researcher with a commitment to challenge the oppressive conditions in which indigenous peoples (and the most vulnerable social classes) in Mexico live, I consider critical theory and post-structuralism the most relevant paradigms for my research.

Critical theory has its origins in the 1920s at the University of Frankfurt's Institute of Social Research. Based on the ideas of Marx, Kant, Hegel, and Weber, the first critical theorist initiated a longstanding tradition of social thought. The predecessors of this school of thought, Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, left Germany after the Nazi's occupation, to return later in the 1950s (Harvey, 1990, p. 1).

Critical theory has two main characteristics. On the one hand, critical theory is a response to the Enlightenment, in which rationalism and scientism were becoming the hegemonic ways to interpret the world. On the other hand, contrary to the Enlightenment notion of language as neutral, critical theory considers language to be problematic and critical in shaping the world. The heart of critical theory lies in challenging current oppressive conditions and transforming them through emancipatory practices. Transcending the missionary and/or paternalistic way of 'liberating people', critical theory seeks to uncover unequal and oppressive conditions through organised and democratic processes of collective social action, from grassroots activism to the formulation of more equitable social policies.

In contrast to the positivist or confirmatory perspectives, critical theory assumes that knowledge is a social construct, shaped by historical and cultural contexts, mediated by power relations and linked to social and political interests, regardless of the level of consciousness of the actors (Crotty, 1998). Power relations are submerged in a specific ideology and determined by social and historical values. Thus in critical theory deconstructing knowledge implies putting oppressive social structures at the centre of the social analysis. For this reason, discrimination against indigenous children is a central focus within my research approach. Discriminatory practices are the product of open social and political actions, but they are also embedded as cultural stereotypes in the psyche of educational actors, and even within indigenous peoples themselves, who have internalised a lack of value of their own cultural identity. Post-structuralists believe that individuals are shaped by social, historical, and cultural contexts and,

therefore, challenge any deterministic view that structures are imposed on subjects. In issues of discrimination and racism, for instance, there is an important element of individual agency where the subject has the power to challenge other's social prejudices and her/his own reality. Apple (in Biddle & Anderson, 1986) considers this transformative force of the individual to be one of the main contributions of post-structuralism to critical theory.

The other central characteristic of critical theory is its concept of knowledge. Critique and knowledge are always intertwined in the critical paradigm. In contrast to other research paradigms, critique is an integral part of the whole research process and not a peripheral element: 'knowledge is critique' (1995). The cultural knowledge that indigenous children might bring into the classroom is undermined by power dynamics of what is considered valuable in a *mestizo* setting.

Critical theory conceives reality as dialectic, constantly moving between praxis and theory. It considers multiple realities that are never isolated but in constant interaction (Harvey, 1990, p. 3). In contrast to an interpretivist paradigm, the relationship between the subject and object is in constant flux and our consciousness is not separated from the object. This relationship is what Freire (Crotty, 1998) calls *reflection*, which (when conducted critically and accompanied by actions) results in a transformation of structures. This emancipatory process is identified as *praxis* and, according to Freire, thinking and construction of knowledge are not individualistic efforts, but are undertaken as a communitarian activity, since human beings are historically located and share a 'here and now' with other people (1997). Praxis is a practical reflective activity; it is what changes the world (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). *Theory* and *praxis* are intertwined elements in the critical paradigm, and when present in empirical research, need to be immersed in a constant dialectical analysis (ibid).

Critical research necessarily departs from the socio-historical context of the phenomenon of study and looks for what is not obvious to other kinds of empirical research (Harvey, 1990); as Apple puts it, 'critical theory sees any object relationally' (Harvey, 1990). This is what differentiates this paradigm from other research that includes critical aspects. History is a way of analysing the very formation of oppressive structure and its reproductions, and since my research is concerned with indigenous

peoples, issues of colonialism and its consequences cannot be avoided in the analysis. Understanding the colonial history of America Latina is indispensable to understanding the current struggles as culturally diverse ‘modern’ societies (Apple, 1995).

Paulo Freire (Cusicanqui, 2014) attached great importance to the act of communication. Dialogue, communicative action, and language are essential elements for a critical analysis of the world. Those who are voiceless, as argued by Freire, are oppressed and, therefore, unable to recognise their condition.

Power, language, praxis, oppression, history, ideology, and emancipation become the essential elements of understanding the critical inquiry approach. The role of the researcher in critical theory involves entering a process of self-criticism and reflection that makes her/him conscious of ideological preconceptions, in order to be able to reach deeper levels of understanding (Freire, 2000). It is a process of constant reflection, in which the critical researcher looks for inconsistencies between words and actions in her/himself and others (Gramsci, 1994).

How does critical theory relate to education? Apple (in Harvey, 1990) includes within his work in critical cultural studies, post-structuralist feminist analysis, queer theory, critical race theory, among other critical approaches. Many critical theory scholars argue that the goal of education must be the achievement of freedom, dialogue, liberation, inclusion, and democracy, and that schools should be places of hope and resistance (Apple, 2004, p. 182). It is within this notion of education that my research is situated.

What a post-structuralist perspective brings to my research is the rejection of the ‘grand narrative’² as a reductionist way of explaining a social problem based on a unitary cause related to gender, race, or class (Apple, 1995; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002; Trueba & Zou, 2002). Post-structuralism allows for a focus on firstly, the importance of politics at the micro level, and secondly, the concept of a dynamic identity that is also a site of political struggle (ibid). This notion of dynamic identity

² The ‘holy trinity’ of race, class, and gender, as explained by some authors such as Apple 1995 and McLaren and Kincheloe 2002 (in Apple 1995).

was the centre of my analysis by highlighting the daily struggles of indigenous children for openly recognising their own ethnicities.

Another important aspect of post-structuralism that adds to a critical theory approach is its influence of power in our definitions of the world. According to Foucault, power is embedded in our conceptions of knowledge, truth, and reason; power is linguistically created (in Apple, 1995). The relevance of the analysis of power in my research is essential to the understanding of the asymmetrical relations that take place in schools and classrooms. Foucault argues that the process of education is a way of exerting power; the simple attempt to teach something to someone implies an exercise of power. This is consistent with the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire (Foucault, 1976, 1995) who believed that in order to eliminate asymmetrical relationships in the educational process, teachers and students must engage in horizontal and dialectic relationships and be able to learn from each other.

Post-structuralism recognises power not just as being present in every aspect of society, but as the basis of society (Freire, 2000). Post-structuralism gives great importance to bringing oppressed and marginalised voices to the research as, for example, post-structuralist feminism (Crotty, 1998).

Summing up, the theoretical approaches of critical inquiry, post-structuralism and decolonialism have helped me to look at children's experiences through the lenses of unequal relationships of power. However, I acknowledge that including children's voices in the research process was not an easy task. To promote children's voices was the priority of this research, therefore, I did not want to drown them out by theories, by my own voice as a researcher, or by other voices that may have more power in the field (teachers, principals, etc.).

3.2 Ethnography

Ethnography is considered one of the most powerful tools for emancipatory research, and it also intended to 'explore new ways to conduct qualitative research in schools with diverse student populations in order to pursue a new reform pedagogy based on principals of equity, justice, tolerance, and multiculturalism' (McNay, 1993).

Ethnography is a research methodology that allows us 'to see' (Trueba & Zou, 2002, p.

2) or to expand our ‘field of vision’ (Wade, 1997) on the subjective experiences of children’s daily lives.

In order to be able ‘to see’, one of the most important criteria when conducting an ethnographic study relates to the length of time spent in the field with the objective of having an intensive experience of cultural immersion. I spent a total of one and a half years (October 2006 to January 2008) in the field: in a public school three times a week for at least four hours per day, and in a private school twice a week for at least three hours each day. A year and a half may not seem sufficient to get a real sense of what is happening at the schools, as some ethnographic studies last decades. In fact, it was not until the last few months of fieldwork that I noticed much more openness from the school staff and the parents. With the children it was easier to build relationships of trust and collaboration at a more rapid pace. I believe that spending a longer period in the field would have yielded an even fuller understanding of the dynamics and contradictions within the school, lessening the sometimes-negative views of me as an ‘outsider ‘ doing some ‘kind of homework’ for a university abroad. As Wolcott argues: ‘How can a neophyte fieldworker ever hope to establish the prerequisite long-term acquaintance within the limited time and resources of doctoral research? [...] How quick or rapid can ethnography be and still stake a legitimate claim to being ethnographic? (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995)

Some authors (Wolcott, 2002, p. 36) have tried to develop a standard for judging whether ethnographic research is acceptable or not. However, since ethnography is concerned with understanding how culture, identity, and representation work in the daily lives of individuals or social groups, I share Kincheloe and McLaren’s dynamic conception of culture, who argue that ‘culture has to be viewed as a domain of struggle where the production and transmission of knowledge is always a contested process’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Wolcott, 2002). According to Clifford (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002, p. 95), culture must be understood not as a fixed notion but in terms of displacement, transplantation, disruption, positionality, and difference.

New approaches to ethnography have strongly criticised the anthropological ‘old school’ because of its apolitical stance. Scheurich, for example, calls Wolcott’s approach dangerous in general as a ‘social function, a conservative social function with

an apolitical face, to help create and legitimate a certain kind of inequitable social construction of what we then come to think of as reality' (1992, p. 51). Scheurich considers social research and social reality as ontologically dominated by white racism, and the idea of the individual self as 'the creation of modernism, the individual that Lacan called the transcendental signifier of history. In other words, the individual, autonomous self we are taught to regard as our "birth right", as a person in an elitist, masculinist, heterosexist, and white racist trope' (Scheurich, 2002, p. 51).

Critical ethnography attempts not only to recognise the inequalities of the world, but also to provide a critique of the white privileged elite (Scheurich, 2002, p. 52). Critical ethnography, unlike traditional ethnography, does not assume the neutrality of the researcher (Coffey, 1999; Coffey & Delamont, 2000; Reay et al., 2007; Scheurich, 2002) .

Critical ethnography avoids the danger of 'judging' from a deficit perspective or as Foley (D. Foley, 2002) calls it from 'deficit thinking'. In critical ethnography, 'ethnographers can and should try to escape the recurrent allegorical genre of colonial ethnography – the pastoral, nostalgic, redemptive text that preserves a primitive culture on the brink of extinction for the historical record of its Western conquerors' (1997). As Villenas, Deyhle and Parkers argue 'good ethnographic studies capture the ways in which people make meaning of their lives, and pay close attention to the relations of power against and within which people operate' (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002). As Peter Wade (1997) suggests, ethnographic fieldwork is the research method that allow us 'to see' the discursive constructs and social practices permeated by colonial histories of oppression and discrimination, discourses that might also be present in my own prejudices and unconscious practices being part of the *mestizo* majority and social elite within a country with a colonial history.

A critical ethnographic method requires the accountability of the researcher's preconceptions in order to be loyal to the children's voices. This means making bias explicit, since it is assumed in this theoretical perspective that is not possible to bracket it. By doing so there is a risk of masking or hiding the power influences of the researcher and/or others in the field. In addition, it is my objective to follow a critical ethnographic approach, not only in the research process itself, but also in terms of the

dissemination of the results by making the inequalities within schools visible to a diversity of social groups, including policy-makers, who would not have access to those findings otherwise. This is one of the biggest challenges of conducting urban ethnographies, as Smith cogently argues ‘the challenge is not just to find ways to surface these voices but to do so in format and through vehicles where they cannot be ignored, where they are not filtered through researchers’ dominant cultures of their theories, and where they promote movements of solidarity’ (Parker, Deyhle, & Villenas, 1999, p. 35). I consider this argument to be the main catalyst for me to finish my thesis. I feel a strong commitment to promoting spaces that give voices to indigenous children’s perspectives in several social and political spheres in Mexico, especially since their schooling experiences have not changed much in the last ten years.

3.3 A self-ethnographic look

The importance of incorporating the researcher’s reflexivity into an ethnographic approach has been widely recognised (Smith, 2002). A reflexive ethnographer has the capacity to ‘direct one’s gaze to one’s own experience [to make] possible to regard oneself as ‘other’’ (Behar, 1996; Coffey, 1999; Foley, 2002; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Lather, 1991).

The methodological implications that reflexivity represents in ethnographic research are related to the researcher’s critical gaze to the self-other relationships in the fieldwork in order to make more accurate interpretations (Foley, 2002, p. 144). The researcher is aware of the limitations of his/her own interpretations and makes them explicit in the overall research process. The subjectivity of the researcher is crucial when conducting ethnographic research, especially when trying to overcome the traditional notion of the researcher as the one who has the authorship and knowledge for interpreting the ‘passive’ or ‘naïve’ participants’ perceptions of reality (Foley, 2002). A reflexive researcher is ‘a living, contradictory, vulnerable, evolving multiple self who speaks in a partial, subjective, culture-bound voice’ (Foley, 2002). I tried to bring my own subjectivity to the research process and make explicit my own assumptions. I reflected on my own preconceptions and assumptions that I have been developing, not only during the process of research design, but also as part of my personal history.

Some feminist ethnographers (Foley, 2002, p. 145) consider that bringing the researcher's subjectivity into the research process is one of the benefits of conducting critical ethnography. When formulating my doctoral research proposal, the idea of including my own personal background into the research process seemed an appealing and easy task. However, after coming back to my personal and familiar circumstances in Mexico, the task of defining my own identity and my own social position turned out to be a rather contradictory, and sometimes painful, process. Having lived in the USA and UK for almost four years, it was clear that my 'way of seeing' things had changed. I grew up in a middle-class family, with both parents working, and I attended private schools all my life. During my primary and secondary education, I went to a religious school for girls in a conservative and a strongly catholic state of Aguascalientes, Mexico. My childhood was spent in a mainly middle-class neighbourhood. My mother is a high school teacher and my father was a salesman. During my high school years, I actively volunteered in social projects in my hometown within impoverished neighbourhoods. Those experiences made me feel uncomfortable with both my privilege and the injustices I saw. I started developing feelings of 'class uneasiness' (that I still have).

When I finished high school, I decided to volunteer as a teacher in an indigenous Raramuri community in the south of the state of Chihuahua. The living conditions in the community were of extreme poverty, the only public service being a multi-graded primary school. Despite my lack of professional preparation in pedagogical matters at that time, I became an idealistic and energetic young teacher in an indigenous primary school. Although unconsciously and very well intentioned, I reproduced the role of the coloniser: teaching in Spanish to a group of twenty children whose first language was Raramuri and introducing western medicine to solve health problems. I was recognised, after a few months, as a moral leader within the indigenous community. After those two years of heart-breaking experiences in Agua Amarilla, I never imagined that I was about to start a long path of academic study, along with an endless process of scholarships and grants applications.

I received a full grant to start a bachelor degree in Educational Sciences at a private upper-class University in Monterrey, while I also taught History at a local secondary

school to meet my living expenses. Having lived in a community in extreme poverty conditions, the college experience within a privileged context was a shock. I now also see that the social capital that I had built within impoverished backgrounds (the knowledge and experiences within impoverished contexts, my formal education, my skill to learn English, the language of power, and the development of my oral and writing skills, as well as my social networks), worked in my favour in the form of an on-going upward mobility, while the colonised, indigenous peoples in Agua Amarilla did not have the opportunities that I was able to access. I found myself surrounded by a significant social network of privilege within the Mexican state with the highest income per capita, where there was very little interest in questioning social inequalities. It was as if I was living in a different country. While the Zapatista movement in Chiapas (south of Mexico) was taking a strong stand in many social spheres, at my university (north of Mexico), the movement was criticised as revolutionary and extreme. I found myself working with NGOs and other universities within the state of Nuevo Leon to support the Zapatista movement, facing the repression of the government and university authorities.

Now that I can take a retrospective view, I see my life split between two worlds: privileged and unprivileged contexts, academic and grassroots work, governmental projects and NGO projects, international and local interventions in education. I see my life path full of experiences and perspectives that made me feel simultaneously an expert in nothing but with an ever-growing commitment to challenge inequality in my country, especially within indigenous contexts. However, more than ever, I have come to recognise that I have a mind-set of a coloniser, and that the only way I challenge this way of thinking is by working closely with the colonised, embedded in their projects and needs, in order to unlearn the mainstream beliefs and values constructed during my four decades of life.

My circle of privilege did not end in Monterrey. I got a full scholarship to go to Harvard, and then to Cambridge, and my enormous social network of colonising privileges just kept growing. I always thought that it was possible to maintain a broad perspective by moving into two different worlds: the coloniser and the colonising, Mexico, and the United States and Europe. My commitment has always been with my country and with my people, I always wanted to come back to Mexico to work at a

grassroots level, but why then do I need a PhD degree to do it? At that time, my intuition told me that it was within academia that I could be of more help, that by working within an institution, I would have the support to do further research, a platform to denounce inequalities, and the ability to make proposals of change. Now, I see my role as a bridge or as a translator of the voiceless. I can see that my skills can be of help in attracting both attention and resources from privileged circles, which might be otherwise indifferent to. My educational credentials open up doors with donor agencies, government officials and academic circles. My experiences are valued as having a first-hand knowledge of what is happening within minorised contexts. I have a difficult duty to be loyal to those voices and needs and I have learned to build interdisciplinary and multi-ethnic teams to advance the development and implementation of educational proposals.

I have learned so many lessons along the way. The most important of all is that in Mexico, issues of class, gender, and ethnicity are rarely problematised in the field of education. The second lesson is that even though I have a very strong political commitment to marginalised groups, my own social and cultural identity affects the way I see the world and how I choose to conduct a research project. I conducted this research project as part of my PhD with the help of my supervisor and other academics in Mexico, whose ideas helped me to develop as an independent researcher; however, I realise now that research must be done collaboratively, by privileging the voices, methods, and approaches of those who have identified the research problem. Now my current research includes indigenous peoples, like Ana, a Mixteca student who is about to finish her degree in Educational Sciences and other new indigenous scholars like her, who together are conducting a project similar to the one I conducted for this thesis. She has visited the same schools, asked very similar research questions, but has adopted a different approach, utilising a more collaborative, critical, and decolonising process. Once my research is complete, it would be interesting to undertake a comparative analysis in order to investigate the individual approach (which is promoted by most universities) versus a collective approach to educational research.

This thesis has been the result of a long process of personal and social self-reflection. It has been almost a decade since I wrote my first draft, when I had returned to Mexico after several years of professional studies overseas in USA and the UK. On revising my

drafts for the final version of this thesis, changes in my own paradigms were evident, leading me to become highly critical of my own work. I can see that I needed to understand more deeply the complexities of the diversity of Mexican identities and I can see now, more clearly than ever, that indigenous peoples in my country need to be recognised and valued by the *mestizo* population. There is no way to help overcome the poverty and marginalisation they are experiencing if we, as the dominant society, are not conscious of the discrimination and racism that we exercise in our daily lives. This thesis will always be a work in progress. This is a humble product that tries to make visible my deep indignation with the situation that was revealed through listening to the indigenous children's voices in urban schools in Jalisco. It is my deepest hope that this will go some way to promoting debate and reflection among different social groups, in order to come up with local and citizen-based strategies to battle the unequal relationships that we are reproducing within our own people.

3.4 Participant observation and interviews

Two main research methods were chosen for this ethnographic study: participant observation and interviews. In ethnography, these differ little (Behar, 1996; Coffey, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999). Both require a great deal of rapport and well-developed research and relational skills. Any interview is also observational. Both methods took different forms when applied to different age populations, as will be explained in more detail in the following sections. I used participatory methods of data collection, and looked at children's voices through the lenses of critical and decolonising theories, to try to understand the processes of identity formation within children's narratives.

Participant observation was a constant method during the research. I observed lessons, playground interactions, civic ceremonies, teachers, family meetings and any other special occasions in school life, in an attempt to observe interactions, attitudes, and conversations related to the ethnicity of the students and their families. I also visited the children's neighbourhoods on several occasions, just on informal walks, to talk with their parents at their homes or to visit personnel from the government offices, such as DIF.

I tried to use a participant-friendly approach to interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 141). I used methods from the visual anthropology field such as photographs and drawings (Fraser, Lewis, Ding, Kellett, & Robinson, 2004) to involve children not as passive agents but as active participants negotiating their own roles in the research process.

Many critical theorists have discussed the power relations exercised by the researcher through interviews (Rouch, 1995). As discussed by Scheurich, 'interviews do not simply go along with the researcher's program ... and often use the interviewer as much as the interviewer is using them' (Apple, 1995; Giroux, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002; Weiler, 2001). Power relations in the process of interviewing children must be given serious consideration. As stated by Greene and Hill: 'an interview is a social exchange in which the social demands may outweigh the ostensible demands of the interview itself. Thus, children may give answers that are determined more by their desire to please than their desire to be truthful' (Scheurich, 1997, p. 71). An ethnographic approach is important to reduce these limitations through the use of open-ended questions at the individual and group level. Ethnographic interviews follow a conversational model rather than the positivist model of survey interviews.

I tried to follow Greene and Hill's (2005) suggestion of using rehearsing strategies for dissent and disagreement with children to undermine power relations. I asked children to feel free to stop the interview at any time and to refuse to answer questions that might make them feel uncomfortable. Resistance sometimes took the form of attitudes rather than straightforward verbalisations, so I had to be constantly aware of the child's behaviour and respect it accordingly. As suggested by Greene and Hill (2005), I found myself trapped by the children's pace, the time allocated to the interviews and the location at which these interviews took place. There were children who had a very clear idea of the topics they wanted to talk about. After interviewing a Purepecha girl, I wrote in my field diary:

This first interview began to be practically directed by Ana Rosa, regardless of my asking the questions. She was very clear about the story she wanted to talk about. It was very interesting to see myself submerged by the world she wanted to recreate put aside my research agenda for a moment (FD, January, 31, 2007).

As a researcher, I was aware of the power dynamics during the interviewing process. These power dynamics were not necessarily verbal and, therefore, they were difficult to report and analyse. As Scheurich argues,

Some of what occurs in an interview is verbal. Some is non-verbal. Some occurs only within the mind of each participant (interviewer or interviewee), but it may affect the entire interview. Sometimes the participants are jointly constructing meaning, but at other times one of them may be resisting joint constructions. Sometimes the interviewee cannot find the right words to express herself/himself and, therefore, will compromise her/his meaning for the sake of expediency. There may be incidences of dominance and resistance over large or small issues. There may be monologues. There may be times when one participant is talking about one thing but thinking about something else. A participant may be saying what she thinks she ought to say; in fact, much of the interaction may be infused with a shift between performed or censored statements and unperformed and uncensored statements. Indeed, the 'wild profusion' that occurs moment to moment in an interview is, I would argue, ultimately indeterminable and indescribable (Greene & Hill, 2005, p. 9).

Even though it was my desire to build more horizontal relationships with children, the power dynamics were always present. Firstly, I was considered to be someone with a counselling orientation, since I was frequently seen in the playground talking to students. Some children, who were not familiar with my research, thought that I was a psychologist. Secondly, there is a strong tradition in the public Mexican school of calling almost any adult who is involved in the daily life of the school 'teacher'. From day one, children referred to me as such. On one occasion, some students tried to call me by my name, and the principal corrected them and requested that they call me 'teacher', highlighting the importance of addressing adults respectfully. This limited the possibility of having a different type of relationship with children, however, I was able to develop a more familiar and informal approach with them. Finally, I noticed that the fact that I was seeking information about their personal experiences resulted in a rather top-down relationship, as I was not the one whose life was the subject of the conversation. Diane Reay describes this phenomenon when interviewing women about their involvement in their children's schooling:

While I recognise a process in interviewing of following where woman participants lead, ultimately we as researchers decide if the route is one we want to explore. We retain the power of redirection. All the interviews, from my perspective, were very positive experiences. I felt a great deal of rapport and strong sense of identification with many of their words. However, I have learnt from my own research that it is the researcher, rather than the researched, who is at the heart of the research process. At the end of the interview, I was the person who walked away with what I wanted – at least an hour, and sometimes much more, of interview data (Scheurich, 1997, p. 67). .

I will explain the access and selection process in the following section.

3.5 Access to, and selection of, schools

Researchers sometimes mistakenly consider gaining access to a setting as ‘a single event that, once achieved, requires no further thought. It is however, often a matter of continual negotiation and renegotiation of your relationships with those you study’ (Reay, 1995, p. 212) . It is a process filled with anxieties, uncertainties and power dynamics. As Reay explains, even when we might be aware that the ‘power ultimately lies with the researcher rather than the researched’ (Reay, 1995, p. 211), in the process of gaining access we might often feel like a supplicant and have a sense of intruding into people’s busy schedules.

Very often researchers have to use different tactics and sometimes even ‘perform’ different roles in order to persuade individuals to participate in a research project. Fear of being judged, lack of time, and scepticism about the usefulness and practicality of the research were the most common reactions during my first encounters with the research participants. Annette Lareau explains this emotional process in her research with families:

I found the process of recruiting the families very stressful. A number of people doubted that I would be able to do the field observations [...] Nevertheless, I tried to appear upbeat, comfortable, and light-hearted in all of my conversations with families (Maxwell, 1996, p.66) .

Finding out about emotions within the fieldwork present challenges and sometimes unexpected results (Lareau, 2003, p. 266). Persistence and patience have proved to be

the most important attitudes during the process of accessing the research sites; however, at the end of the selection process the micro politics of the social context might impose the criterion for selection rather than a theoretical approach to sampling (Kleinman & Copp, 1993).

I aimed at having two public schools with a significant indigenous population, with a selection of children balanced by age, gender, and ethnicity for comparison purposes. However, negotiating access took me longer than expected and I decided to select the schools that were willing to participate and that were closer to the neighbourhood where the various indigenous settlements were located. I selected two schools in the same neighbourhood. The Simon Bolivar School is public, with a student population of almost 500 children in grades 1 to 6, holds classes from 2 to 6 pm. The Violeta Parra School is private, with a student population of almost 90 students in grades 1 to 6, and holds classes from 8 am to 1 pm.

3.5.1 Access to a research team

The process of negotiating access to the schools started early in 2006, when I contacted the Centre of Research and Higher Studies in Social Anthropology (CIESAS). At this time they were coordinating a research project in collaboration with the Iberoamerican University (UIA) called 'Indigenous children in urban schools: the cities of Guadalajara, Monterrey and Mexico'. This project, funded by the Ford Foundation, started in 2002 and brought together researchers from the field of Social Anthropology, Sociolinguistics and Education, with the objective of generating information and analysis that would guide public policies to respond to the presence of indigenous students in the classrooms. After discussing my research proposal with the principal investigators of the project, Regina Martinez-Casas and Guillermo de la Peña, I asked to become a member of their research team and hopefully have access to the schools in which they were already working. Regina Martinez-Casas informed me that conducting research was possible in any of the three cities: Guadalajara, Mexico or Monterrey. I decided to conduct my research in Guadalajara, because it was the only one of the three states in which intercultural bilingual education programmes had not been implemented in urban schools. In addition, although Mexico City has the greatest proportion and

diversity of indigenous immigrant populations, most of the investigators and research centres of the country are concentrated there. I considered it important to distribute the research efforts to other research institutes, away from the country's capital. A third, and personal reason, is because my hometown, Aguascalientes, is two hours away from Guadalajara.

CIESAS provided me with a copy of the official permission from the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) (See Appendix 1) that they had obtained to gain access for their research to schools in the periphery of the state of Jalisco in three municipalities: Zapopan, Tlaquepaque and Guadalajara.

The support of the CIESAS team was essential for my first encounter with the school staff. As a research team, Francisco Talavera, Regina Martinez, Guillermo de la Peña and I visited the schools in the neighbourhood to try to talk to the principals about my project. Francisco was one of a Guillermo and Regina's Master's students in Social Anthropology and he had conducted ethnographic research on the sociocultural context of the area during the preceding couple of years as part of his Master's thesis on P'urhépecha populations (Lewis, 2005). The CIESAS team recommended that I conduct research in the schools in the neighbourhoods where Francisco had been working, since they did not have data in relation to schooling processes.

The CIESAS project ended very soon after I started my fieldwork; Francisco and the rest of the students graduated, Regina Martinez moved to Mexico City and Guillermo de la Peña was involved in other projects. I only had one opportunity to present some of my preliminary results in a seminar they held on February of 2008. However, I became a permanent member of the National Seminar on Ethnicity, Indigenous Peoples, and Schooling organised by Maria Bertely, a CIESAS researcher in Mexico City. Along with academics nationwide, the seminar provided a permanent support system for my research and I still have the privilege of sharing ideas and projects with its members via teleconferences every two months.

3.5.2 Access to the schools' principals

During my research, I realised that the main fieldwork gatekeepers in the Mexican public schools are the school's principals. Having an official letter from the SEP does not guarantee access to schools nor does it ensure willingness to cooperate even when access had been granted. Persuading principals, especially those in marginalised schools, must be given serious consideration when conducting research in schools in Mexico, since there is a fear of being judged and exposed. Getting close to the principal as a researcher, also raises issues of 'loyalty' or 'taking sides' when the educational community is divided, and when we enter the field with little knowledge of the micro politics at the school. This process opens up relationships of trust with some actors and closes others down. At first, all principals seemed unenthusiastic when they heard about the research proposal. Even though I had the letter from the Ministry of Education and my introduction letter (See Appendix 2) explaining the research project, most principals said that they had to consult their supervisors and check the rules of letting outsiders conduct research within the school. This routine suggests on the one hand, the great centralism and lack of autonomy of local schools, and on the other hand, the lack of familiarity and anxieties of the school staff with research projects involving the presence of outsiders³.

3.5.3 Access to the Simon Bolivar School

The Simon Bolivar School is at the foot of the Colli Hill, in the municipality of Zapopan. Teacher Fabiola, the head of the school, was a middle-aged woman who had

³ Three public schools in the same area refused to participate. One principal questioned the relevance and practicality of my research project and asked about the 'direct benefits' that the school and children would obtain. He looked resistant to the idea of having an 'outsider' with access to information about the things that were not working at the school. This principal summarised this fear by saying: 'I can tell you right now, many things are wrong in the school...' Another principal who refused to participate explained to me that it was very difficult to work in such impoverished context with so many difficulties in terms of family disintegration, and alcohol and drug abuse. She wanted to 'warn' me that children in her school come from very unfavourable backgrounds and that 'she hoped that I would not be disappointed' with what I found. I left her office thinking on what she really meant by 'disappointing me' and whether I had not been sufficiently assertive and clear in explaining the aims of my project. After several phone calls and cancelled visits to the school, I was granted another interview, where she apologised and said that, sadly, after two attempts at persuading the teachers to participate, they did not feel comfortable with my presence in the school because they would feel evaluated. She blamed the teachers for the lack of willingness to collaborate in this research project.

arrived at the school only a couple of months before. Teacher Fabiola read the introduction letter very carefully, in which I explained that my research aimed to understand the social and cultural diversity in the school. She smiled at my letter when she saw the Cambridge University heading and said that I needed to have a badge to enter into the school so I could be identified because, as far as she knew, I could be making up a whole story about my studying in such a renowned university and just copy-pasting the headings from the university into my presentation letter. I agreed to bring official identification to the school and wear the badge at all times.

When I showed the official letter from the Ministry of Education giving the CIESAS research team permission to access the school, I noticed a change in her attitude. Later I found out that the person who signed the letter was an influential staff member from the Ministry and a good friend of Teacher Fabiola. She said she would consult with the supervisor and asked me to come back in a couple of days. I explained that I did not want to interfere with the children's classes and that I would be willing to help in any way with administrative or teaching tasks. I offered to come only during the break so I would not interfere with the classes and that later on we would make changes to my schedule to see whether it would be possible to attend civic ceremonies (flag salutations) every Monday and observe classes. She agreed that I could attend the school only on Mondays and Tuesdays during the break (4:30 to 5:00). Later on, I was able to attend the school every day during the regular schedule.

As Maxwell (1996) argues, the process of getting access involves continuous renegotiation. I had to negotiate access to the Simon Bolivar School at least three times because of the constant changes to the headship of the school. The first negotiation took place on October 2006 with Teacher Fabiola as the school principal, then on April 2007 with Teacher Joel as the new head and finally, at the beginning of the academic year 2008-2009, once I had finished the data analysis and wanted to go back to the school to discuss the results with some of the teachers and students, I found out that the teacher from first grade was now the substitute principal.

The Simon Bolivar School has a student population of almost 500 children. It has two classrooms per grade (Years 1 to 6) in two buildings, and one computer room that was always closed because, according to the principal, they had to take good care of the

computers as they were expensive to repair and they did not have a computer teacher, so they preferred to keep the machines safe. The last couple of months of my fieldwork, Teacher Joel suggested I interview children and parents in the computer room, but I had the feeling that he was a little nervous at having the classroom open. After some days Teacher Joel informed me that the keys had been lost so I went back to conducting my interviews in the playground with no bench to sit on.

The school schedule was shorter than in other schools. Regular classes in the afternoon are held from 2 pm to 6:30 pm; however, according to the principal, it was a request made by the parents that the classes finish at 6:00 pm as the sun sets earlier in winter and it was a not a very safe neighbourhood to walk in for many children who live far from the school. The schedule however, does not change during summer time where there is sunlight until 8:30 pm.

Figure 3.2 Photograph of the building of the Simon Bolivar School



Negotiations with Teacher Fabiola for access to the Simon Bolivar School were much more straightforward after our first conversation. Access, however, to the teachers was always a struggle. Over the months I realised that most teachers were dissatisfied with the administration of the school and some of them had an on-going resistance to Teacher Fabiola's initiatives. I realised that in the history of the Simon Bolivar School, teachers had played an important role in making the principals leave the school. Teacher Fabiola encountered significant opposition and the teachers regularly complained about her direct style. I tried to be very careful to not take sides and I was able to gain the trust of the teachers who were most critical of her. I decided to develop individual relationships with the teachers, avoid talking about school issues, and to centre conversation on the children. However, there were two teachers who explicitly refused

to participate in my research and always expressed their discontent at my presence at the school. Luckily, they were teachers from the second grade, where I did not have children participating in my study.

Access to the Violeta Parra School

Obtaining access to the Violeta Parra School was the result of a mutual empathy with the principal and owner of the school, Teacher Antonia, since she was studying for a Master's in Education and was especially concerned with the social and family situation of the students. I met the principal when the CIESAS team and I visited the neighbourhood. That day, Teacher Antonia was at the school reception; Regina introduced us and presented the research proposal. The principal said that she did not have time at that moment and invited us to make an appointment for the following week. However, we had the opportunity to discuss the research aims with her and she readily recognised the importance of the research.

My first encounter with Teacher Antonia was based on our personal experiences, filled both with family struggles and graduate study demands. The common experience made access to the school a personal and informal process from the very first moment. She said she was very pleased that I had chosen to conduct my research in her school.

The school was considerably smaller than the Simon Bolivar School. It had an average pupil population of 90 and one classroom per grade (Years 1 to 6) with fewer than 15 students per class. I was able to develop a familiar relationship with almost all the teachers and students, and many of them expressed their desire to participate in the research. However, I was able to include only five indigenous and five *mestizo* children in my sample from the Violeta Parra School. At the Simon Bolivar School I had 34 children and, at the end on my fieldwork, I ended up spending more time at the Simon Bolivar School.

Figure 3.3 Photograph of the building of the Violeta Parra School



Reflecting on the relationships with the participants is not an easy task. This implied an awareness of the need to build honest, fair and relationships of trust in which the ultimate gains were not only translated into academic benefits for me. Some scholars, whose research is related to issues of cultural recognition, discrimination, etc., address the issue of reciprocity by writing ‘multivocal’ ethnographies in order to privilege participant’s voices and reach diverse audiences outside of academic circles (Talavera, 2006). Other scholars suggest engaging in some type of advocacy during the dissemination phase of the research by using mass media, conferences, policy papers, etc., (Lather, 1991; Wade, 1997). In order to address the issue of reciprocity with the school staff and the children, and avoid a unilateral or exploitative relationship during my time in the schools, I volunteered to give hours of my time helping the children with their school work: homework, extra reading, special tutoring, or any other task that the teachers or principals considered helpful for the children. However, regardless of my offer, on only two occasions was I able to do this with children. I helped Arturo, a Purepecha boy at the Violeta Parra School, with his Maths assignments for two weeks during vacations. Later on, another Purepecha boy in the sixth grade at the Simon Bolivar School asked me for help in preparing for his admission exam to secondary school. With teachers and principals, however, my offer was different. The principal of the public school, Teacher Fabiola, asked me to help one of the children, Armando, a child from first grade who was having a lot of problems. Working with Armando was my first task each day of fieldwork at the Simon Bolivar School. Armando’s teacher was expecting me to take him out of the classroom to work with him because he was disruptive in class. The child seemed to have a developmental delay in his communication skills, and according to his teachers and the child’s sister, he was experiencing sexual and physical abuse at home. Nobody in the school wanted to

denounce the child's parents for sexual and physical abuse because they were afraid of getting into trouble with Armando's father. I consulted the people at DIF and we presented an anonymous formal complaint. In the meantime, the child and I developed a closer relationship and even though he did not communicate verbally with me he enjoyed spending time working on different activities. After some time of working with the child, I submitted a report to Teacher Fabiola of what we had worked on and she presented it to the supervisor's office, because the father had complained that the teacher was not doing her job with the child. Teacher Fabiola invited me to attend a meeting at the supervisor's office with the child's father, but he never showed up. After several months, the child stopped attending school because he started attending a special education programme. However, his sister, who was in the research sample of *mestizo* children, said that the child was at home not attending any class.

As part of the reciprocity agreement at the Simon Bolivar School, I was asked to organise a seminar for teachers on the ENLACE results and the current policy trends regarding standardised testing in other countries. I also substituted for teachers who, for diverse reasons, did not show up without notice and I taught in almost all grades of the school, sometimes without any chance for preparation.

In the Violeta Parra School, I was asked to give them a course on discipline and classroom management and help the principal with the ideas she had for improving the school management. It was very common that after I had finished interviewing children, the principal asked me to go to her office to talk to me about different problems with families, children, and teachers, and ask for my advice.

3.6 Data collection

I organised the data collection process in four stages. Firstly, I established a rapport and familiarity with the children and the school staff. Secondly, I developed strategies for selecting the children who were going to participate in my research, as will be explained later in this section. Thirdly, I used individual and group interviews with children using visual methods and also interviewed parents and the school staff. I called this stage in the data collection process: 'Listening to children's experiences'. Finally, I concentrated on trying to give some preliminary results of my research to children and the school

staff in preparation for leaving the field. The following timetable shows the stages and activities that took place during the year and a half of fieldwork:

Table 3.1 Timetable of the Data Collection Process

Activities	Oct 2006	Nov 2006	Dec 2006	Jan 2007	Feb 2007	Mar 2007	Apr 2007	May 2007	Jun 2007	Jul 2007	Sep 2007	Oct 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007
Stage One. Establishing a rapport and relationships of trust in the field														
Access and familiarisation with the schools														
Negotiation of informed consent with children and school staff														
Negotiation of the reciprocity strategy														
Stage Two. Selecting participants														
Students' questionnaires														
Selection of participant students														
Stage Three. Listening to children's experiences														
Group interviews with children														
First set of individual interviews with children														
Group activity – How am I? How am I not?														
Second set of individual interviews with children														
Third set of individual interviews with children using drawings or photographs														
Interviews with principals, teachers, and parents														
Stage Four. Getting back to the participants and preparing to leave the field														
Meeting with teachers to share preliminary results														
Meeting with children to share preliminary results														
Submission of a preliminary report														

Stage One: Establishing a rapport and relationships of trust in the field

I started building my relationships with the children and the school staff during recess and on the playground. During the first weeks in the schools, I only joined the children at informal moments of school time in the playground, starting conversations with them. Then I started bringing some crayons and paper to the school to do some drawings, which proved to be a very successful strategy. However, after several weeks, it was the same group of children, most of them girls, who gathered with me during the break.

After a period of constant presence in the school, I was able to gain the trust of some other children and teachers, although at the Simon Bolivar School, a couple of teachers and two indigenous girls were consistently reluctant to talk to me.

Stage Two: Selecting participants

After a month of establishing some level of rapport, I designed the criteria for selecting the children who would be participating in the research project. I distributed a **socioeconomic questionnaire** to all students in both schools (See Appendix 3). Among the questions I asked were:

- a. **Personal and School Information:** name, address, school's name, grade, teacher's name, age, territory, closest friends, and whether or not they work.
- b. **Family Information:** number of family members, parents' occupations, parents' levels of schooling, whether one or both parents spoke a language in addition to Spanish, money spent at school, and leisure activities.
- c. **Household characteristics:** available services at home (running water, electricity, etc.), number of books, people who might offer support in school activities, and whether or not they were willing to participate in the research project.

The purpose of this questionnaire was twofold: I wanted to lower the expectations and possible fears that teachers and principals might have about my presence in the schools. I wanted to present some results as soon as possible, to let them know that I was not interested in evaluating their work, but to know more about the socioeconomic conditions of the children. Secondly, the questionnaire was intended to identify the indigenous population in both schools by asking whether someone in the household spoke a language different from Spanish and, more specifically, regarding the child's mother and father. I processed 363 children's questionnaires from both schools (from students from 3rd to 6th grade) and I shared with the teachers and principals a summary with the main results (See Appendix 4 for a summary of the socioeconomic report of both schools). Some of the socioeconomic characteristics of the households drawn from the socioeconomic questionnaire were:

- 17% are single parent households. The average number of people living in each household is 7, reaching in some cases the number of 19.
- 7% of the children in both schools are originally from states other than Jalisco.
- 56% of the parents in the Simon Bolivar School and 50% in the Violeta Parra School are immigrants from other states of the country. The majority of the mothers work as housecleaners (57 %) and the fathers as construction workers (47 %).
- The basic services by household are shown in the following table:

Table 3.2. Household characteristics

Households characteristics	Simon Bolivar School % (n=253)	Violeta Parra School % (n=110)
With kitchen	84	68
The kitchen is also a bedroom	13	6
With running water	81	60
With water provided by pipes	17	22
With bathroom	93	85
With sewage	86	76
With electricity	95	86
With gas	93	84
With sink	90	70
With hand basin	56	74
With shower	53	74
With WC	78	76
With water heater	31	38
With air conditioner	15	20
With heating system	20	23
With telephone	51	78
With computer	19	39

In the end, I was able to accomplish my two objectives: firstly, teachers seemed to be satisfied after reading the results and some of them commented on the results and gave me additional information about some children; and secondly, I was able to identify most of the indigenous children who were to be invited to take part in the research study.

In addition to the students' questionnaire, I asked the teachers to respond to some questions in order to identify the students that I wanted to work with. This also was intended to identify indigenous children in the school. The questionnaire contained the following questions:

1. In your view, which students come from the most unfavourable socioeconomic backgrounds (the poorest)? Would you mind telling me their names?
2. Which students do you consider to have behavioural problems? Would you mind telling me their names?
3. Do you have students from outside this state? Would you mind telling me their names?
4. Do you have students whose parents belong to an indigenous group? Would you mind telling me their names?

From the teachers' answers, I was able to select the non-indigenous students for my research study: children whom teachers considered to be the poorest or with any kind of behavioural problems in the classroom. I sought an element of social class, ethnicity, and disruptiveness in the participant group of students. This research instrument promoted, in many cases, a channel for exploring the ethnicity of some students. A few teachers answered the questionnaire by asking the students to raise their hands in order to answer the questions. It would have been very interesting to be in the classroom and observe whether indigenous children raised their hand or not, although I had the opportunity to observe this dynamic later in the fieldwork in a Year 5 classroom during an interview with the teacher.

Both questionnaires were very helpful in selecting the students (indigenous and non-indigenous) that were going to be invited to take part of the research study. I selected 44 students, 22 indigenous, and 22 *mestizos* balancing the groups according to gender and grade.

Table 3.3 Selection of students by ethnicity, gender, grade, and type of school

		Nahuatl	Purepecha	Totonaco	Mazahua	Mestizos	
Year 3	Public	1 boy	2 boys 1 girl	1 boy		3 boys 1 girl	
	Private					1 boy	
Year 4	Public		1 boy 1 girl		1 girl	2girls 1boys	
	Private	1 girl	2 boys			2 girls 1 boy	
Year 5	Public		2 girls 1 boy			2 boys 2 girls	
	Private	1 girl					
Year 6	Public	1 boy 1 girl	2 girls	1 girl 1 boy		4 girls 2 boys	
	Private		1 boy			1 boy	
		5	13	3	1	22	Total 44

I started talking to the students to invite them to participate in the project. Most of them agreed. Two Nahua girls did not accept because their mother told them that nobody should know that they were indigenous.

Stage Three: Listening to children's experiences

In January 2007, once the children had agreed to be interviewed and after I had explained to them the confidentiality and anonymity of the information, I decided to start with a group interview with the children in the upper grades (5th and 6th grades). The task had the objective of identifying, through diverse photographs, to what extent the children were sensitive to cultural differences and whether or not they identified themselves with indigenous peoples. The photographs included children from different parts of the world: children in a Tibetan and Indian school, African children, and indigenous children from Michoacan and Chiapas, Mexico. I asked the children to observe the photos and answer some questions on paper:

1. Which photographs do you like most? Why?
2. Which photographs do you like least? Why?
3. Who are the children that look most like you?
4. Who are the children that do not look like you?

I noticed through this exercise that children had severe difficulties in writing down extended answers. They just wrote one or two words and were insecure about their answers looking constantly for my approval and direction. After this experience, I started to observe the writing skills of the children in other school contexts and once I was able to enter into the classrooms, I confirmed that children are not used to writing to express their ideas. The writing that I observed in common teaching practice was merely copying the textbook page or answering simple questionnaires.

Even though the experience with this activity was not very successful because of the lack of writing skills, I noticed how some indigenous children rapidly identified the cultural diversity among the photos and described the differences in terms of language, clothing, food, housing, etc.

With the lower grades (3rd to 5th) I used a different group activity. I gave them a cut out of a boy or a girl and asked them to describe ‘how they are’ in the centre of the drawing and ‘how they are not’ outside the drawing (See Appendix 5). It seemed that this was a pleasant activity for them and it was very interesting to notice how they defined themselves not only in terms of personality characteristics but also in physical features mentioning colour of the skin, for instance.

It is important to highlight that the context in which the interviews and activities took place was not the most favourable. In both schools, there was no available space for me to work regularly with the children, so almost all my activities took place in the schoolyard, seated on the ground and in the case of the public school, with no shade from the midday sun. Sometimes it rained and the children and I would take shelter under the roof of an open corridor. Normally, there were interruptions of people entering and leaving the school and asking me to get someone to open the school for them, or just people walking by and commenting.

These circumstances in which the interviews took place presented both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, children started to see my presence in the school as part of the common scene. It would be commonplace to see me talking to a student in the playground and have other children, who were not participating in the study, approach us and say that they also wanted to talk with me. Many children had the

impression that I was a psychologist trying to help children with family issues. I also think that children felt less intimidated talking in a public space with me. It seemed more like an informal conversation. On the other hand, children might not have had enough privacy to discuss sensitive topics because the environment was too open, allowing other children or teachers to easily hear what was being said.

Once the students were more familiar with me, I started with individual interviews (Appendix 6), following a semi-structured approach. The first individual interview was concerned with understanding the children's family's background and migration experiences. In the case of indigenous children, I also asked about their views on their ethnicity and language use in their families, asking the following questions:

- Do your parents (and grandparents) speak a language other than Spanish?
- Do your parents (and grandparents) speak an indigenous language?
- Are your parents (and grandparents) indigenous?
- What language do they speak?
- Do you speak? (Do you understand?)
- What language do your parents (and grandparents) speak at home?
- What language do your parents (and grandparents) use when talking to you and your siblings?
- Are you indigenous too? (Why not?)
- What language is spoken in your parents (and grandparents) town?

The second interview was a follow-up of the themes that each child had brought up in the first interview and I included conversations about their schooling experiences and expectations.

A third interview was conducted with 50% of the children (22). For this set of interviews, I focused mostly on interviewing indigenous children (although I also interviewed children who were immigrants or children of immigrants). Since I had 44 children in my selected group, I decided to reduce the number of participants in the study in order to focus more closely on the identity processes of indigenous children. There was a big difference between the first and the second interviews. In the first,

children answered with very short answers, sometimes just 'yes' or 'no'. In the second interview they had often asked their parents about the topics in the first interview so they could provide more information. For the third interview, I used a different strategy with the students from 3rd to 5th grade from that used with students in 6th grade. Students from lower grades elaborated on drawings of their communities of origin. I provided them with crayons and paper and they did their drawings at home. Some of their parents helped them and it seemed that some conversations took place at certain homes, giving details about the landscape, the traditions of the communities, the type of clothing, traditional food, etc.

Once the children had their drawings, I proceeded with the interview. I noticed an enormous change in the children during this third approach. They felt more relaxed and spontaneous in the interview and they were more also familiar with the digital recorder. They would have the recorder hung around their neck and had worked out, how to use the play and stop buttons.

A similar approach was followed with students from 6th grade, although instead of drawings, they were given a photo project. I gave them disposable cameras so they could photograph their neighbourhoods. I obtained parents' permission before sending the cameras home, because the principals and teachers said that parents were very cautious about the use of cameras at schools because there was a rumour of people taking pictures of children because they wanted to abduct them. I only gave cameras to children who had brought signed permission slips to school from their parents. Most of the parents agreed for their children to participate, although two indigenous parents did not.

I asked them to use the cameras to show who they were and how they lived. The guidelines that were given to them were:

- a) Six photos that show who you are, your family, and friends
- b) Two photos of your entertainment activities
- c) If you work, two photos that show the kind of work that you do
- d) If you help with house chores, two photos that show the kind of work that you do
- e) Two photos of the places or things at your home that you like the most

- f) Two photos of the places or things at your home that you do not like
- g) Two photos of the places or things at your neighbourhood that you like the most
- h) Two photos of the places or things at your neighbourhood that you do not like
- i) Two photos of the places where you feel safe
- j) Two photos of the places where you feel unsafe
- k) Two free photos

At the same time I conducted the third set of interviews with 10 teachers and three principals (See Appendix 7), and 7 parents (See Appendix 8) as well.

Stage Four: Getting back to the participants and preparing to leave the field

Close to the end of the academic year, I asked the students to fill out a brief evaluation form (See Appendix 9) about their experience during the research project. I asked them questions about the activities they liked the most during their participation in the study, whether or not they were willing to continue participating, and how they felt, in general, during the one-on-one interviews. Some children (especially the youngest) said they felt happy talking with me, but they did sometimes get nervous during the interviews, and that they preferred drawing and taking photos to being interviewed.

The number of interviews, in duration and dates are presented in Appendix 10. The first interview lasted an average of 18 minutes, the second 27 minutes and the third about 8 minutes. The students themselves chose pseudonyms at the end of the academic year. I was able to collect 115 pages of field notes, including both descriptive and analytical insights.

It was very difficult to leave the field. I found myself wanting to keep going to the school as if I needed to know how things were going and how the children and teachers were doing. Every week, I felt that I had to go for some reason, either to say hello to the students or to collect more information. I also felt that, with so many changes happening at the Simon Bolivar School, it might be difficult to have access to the school in case I needed to collect further information. It seems that leaving the field, as the literature shows (Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999; Wade, 1997), is a complex task but overall the fieldwork experience had been a deeply transformative adventure for me as a researcher. I still receive phone calls from time to time from a couple of indigenous

students who participated in the study. Some of them are about to finish secondary school, and we are planning to have another interview about their schooling experience when they finish the current academic year.

I am currently conducting fieldwork again in the same school for a project coordinated by the Colegio de Mexico. A group of researchers from the states of Jalisco, Queretaro, San Luis Potosi and Mexico City got together to find out how to help schools identify their cultural diversity. After nine years, not much has changed at the school. Teachers are different, except for one, who is now the principal. However, the conditions of indigenous students are exactly the same as when I was first started conducting fieldwork.

3.7 Data analysis

Traditionally, ethnography has been identified as a holistic methodology in which data collection and analysis are not separate or distinct. Rather they are part of a dialectic process (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). In my experience as a novice researcher, I definitely experienced the dialectic and sometimes-chaotic process of data collection and analysis. I tried different ways of analysing the data, from reading and re-reading the transcripts, to coding manually or using NVIVO, and writing descriptive and analytic memos. The idea of collecting, transcribing, and coding simultaneously proved an almost impossible task. Fieldwork was so intense that it was not until I had a complete corpus of interviews that I was able to look at the bigger picture of children's experiences and patterns in the data.

Table 3.4. Timetable of data analysis and writing up

Activities	Jan 2008	Feb 2008	Mar 2008	Apr 2008	May 2008	Jun 2008	Jul 2008	Aug 2008	Sep 2008	Oct 2008	Nov 2008	Dec 2008	Jan 2009	Feb 2009-	Oct 2016
Interview transcription															
Data Analysis															
Translation of transcripts															
Writing up															

I coded the data by following a whole-text approach to avoid the risk of losing the context of the interview or fragmenting important information by using some decontextualised codes (Behar, 1996; Kleinman & Copp, 1993). I tried to move between ‘parts and the whole’ of the data (Coffey, 1999). In addition to the interview transcriptions and observation notes, I built independent files for each child, parent, and teacher, and worked constantly on a portrait with descriptive information about each of them. These indices included information from observation notes, demographic data from the initial questionnaire, and some of the students’ activities such as drawings, photos, etc. This allowed me to create a general picture of the process followed with each child and to be able to distinguish changes and contradictions. It has been interesting to see how through having all the information together, children’s involvement has changed from the first activity to the most recent one.

My process of data analysis was divided into four stages that I defined as: 1) intuitive questioning of the data, 2) labelling, 3) building a descriptive coding frame, and 4) setting up an analytical framework.

Stage One of Data Analysis: Intuitive questioning of the data

In order to have a clear route to follow in the process of data analysis, I wrote down my own predictions and assumptions about my existing data, guided at the same time by my initial research questions. Those predictions are ideas that emerged from my fieldwork experience and that answered the question ‘What do I think I might be able to find in my data?’ At first, I came up with five topics or ideas that I could start developing as possible themes for analysis:

1. Processes of Identity Formation
2. Bicultural Experiences
3. Experiences of Discrimination
4. Schooling Experiences
5. Use of indigenous language

Stage Two of Data Analysis: Labelling the Data

I read the transcripts and followed Charmaz's (2006) suggestion of 'attach[ing] labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about'. After coding some interviews (I had started with some transcripts of indigenous children), I realised that many of the codes were related to the topics/intuitions that I had in mind. I organised these codes as 'tree nodes', using the NVIVO vocabulary (see the table below for tree nodes). There was information related to the methodology or contextual information of the child of his/her family, therefore, I started to code this information as 'free nodes'.

THEMES		INITIAL CODES	
Processes of identity formation		Elements that might define identity – language and clothing	
		Elements that might define identity – music	
		Self-identification with their ethnicity	
		Self-image	
		Sharing ethnicity at school	
Bicultural experiences		Children's activities here	
		Children's activities there	
		Children's experiences here	
		Children's experiences there	
		Description of community of origin	
		Differences between here and there	
		Family's migratory experience	
		Children's migratory experience	
		Parents' migratory experience	
		Parents' occupation	
		Parents' origin	
		Reference to nature	
		Spontaneous narratives	
		Stories told by family members	
Experiences of discrimination		Experiences of bullying	
		Experiences related to the use of language	
		Experiences related to social class or poverty conditions	
Schooling experiences		Children's aspirations	
		Family's schooling experiences	
		How children perceive their own learning	
		How children see teacher practices	
		Children's schooling experiences	
		Parents' expectations	
		School expectations	
		What they want to be when they are adults	
		Children's knowledge of indigenous language	
		Parent's language	

Use of indigenous language	Stereotypes in the use of indigenous language
	Use of indigenous language here
	Use of indigenous language there

Stage Three of Data Analysis: Building a Descriptive Coding Frame

By labelling the data, I was able to build a descriptive coding frame that included the themes that I had considered before and those that emerged from a deeper relationship with the data. I went back to the data to see if this descriptive coding frame was accurate and labelled the data by the following colours:

COLOURS	CODES	SUBCODES
Yellow	1. Family background	1.1 Definitions of their families 1.2 Family networks to find jobs 1.3 Family experiences in relation to labour (gendered) 1.4 Division of roles at home (gendered) 1.5 Children's perceptions of parents' occupations 1.6 Family reasons to migrate (economic, illness, visit) 1.7 Role of extended family (solidarity networks and economic support)
Blue	2. Experiences 'there' (community of origin)	2.1 Description of the community of origin 2.2 Leisure activities (contact with nature, relaxation, and free life style) 2.3 Harder activities for subsistence (fewer economic and educational opportunities) 2.4 Language use and communication with family members (obstacles, role of translators, means of communication) 2.5 Perceived differences in relation to people and traditions
Green	3. Experiences 'here' (city)	3.1 Responsibilities at home 3.2 Religious activities 3.3 Leisure activities 3.4 Time spent with parents (communication patterns) 3.5 Reference to physical violence at

		home 3.6 Reference to alcohol abuse 3.7 Reference to drug abuse
Orange	4. Use of indigenous language	4.1 Language 4.2 Means of communication – focus on grandparents and children (obstacles) 4.3 How language is transmitted and/or maintained 4.4 How much children understand indigenous language? Contradictions between what they say and do not say 4.5 Positive associations of ethnic identity (feelings of pride) 4.6 Negative associations of ethnic identity (feelings of shame) 4.7 Role of translators
Pink	5. Ethnic Identification	5.1 Children's definition of ethnicity - Language - Territory - Kinship 5.2 Reasons for learning their parents' indigenous language 5.3 Ethnicity and class – stereotypes: poor, language deficiencies, dirty, hard working, shy
Purple	6. Aspirations	6.1 Professional aspirations 6.2 Educational aspirations 6.3 Occupational aspirations
Gray	7. Schooling experiences	7.1 Sharing ethnicity at school 7.2 School experience and poverty 7.3 Experiences of discrimination and bullying 7.4 What children like about school 7.5 What children don't like about school 7.6 Perceptions of their own learning process 7.7 Perceptions of teachers 7.8 Perceptions of classmates 7.9 Parents' involvement in school activities 7.10 Parents' choice for private education 7.11 Parents' perceptions of the school 7.12 Parents' educational expectations 7.13 Parents' schooling experiences

		and educational opportunities
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Stage Four: Building an Analytic Coding Frame

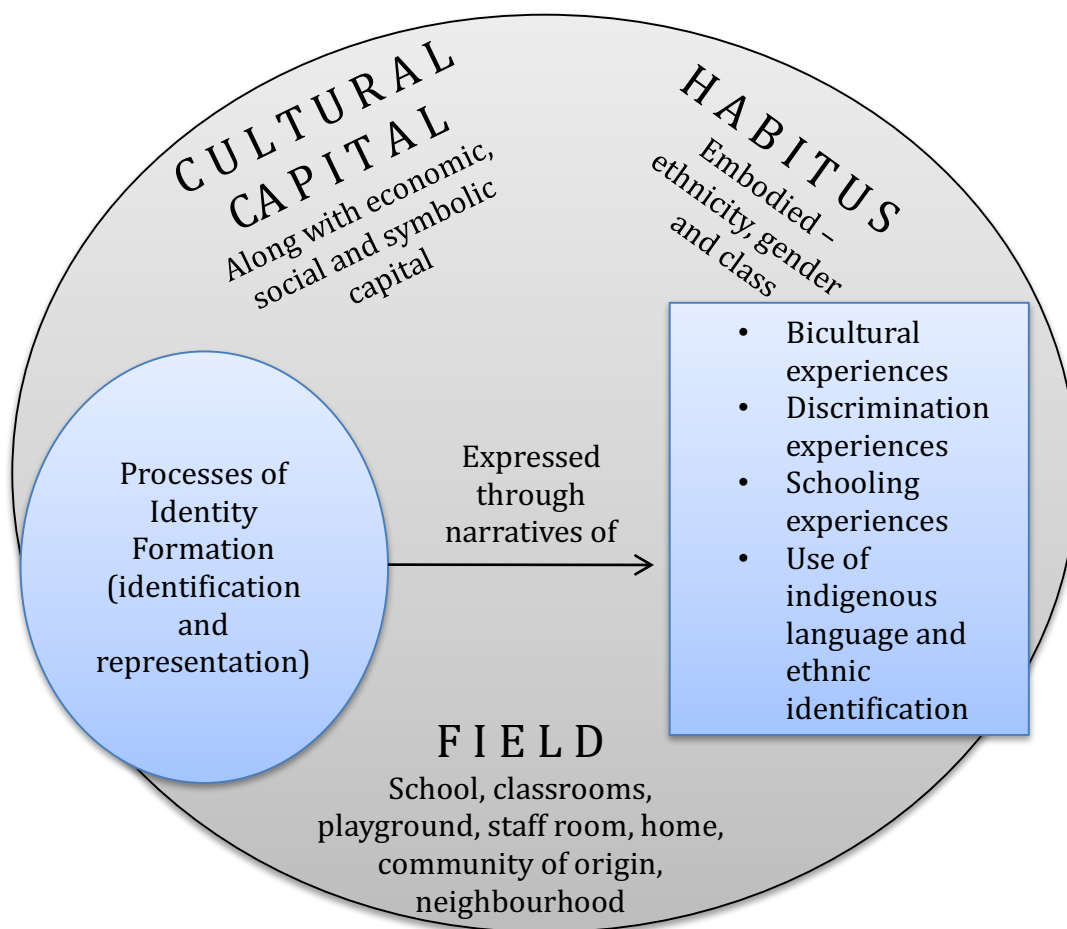
An analytic coding frame was built in order to identify the theoretical concepts according to my original analytical lens of critical theory, post-structuralism, and decolonisation. Figure 3.4 shows the relationships between identity formation and processes of identification and representation of immigrant indigenous children. The analytic frame helped me understand how the processes of identity formation were immersed in emerging themes through the children's narratives: a) bicultural experiences, b) discrimination experiences, c) schooling experiences, and d) use of indigenous language and ethnic identification.

Charmaz (2006:169) argues that in contrast to a quantitative design, 'in a grounded theory study you put your sensitizing concepts and theoretical data to work in the theoretical framework'. My theoretical framework drew on concepts of cultural capital, habitus, and field in order to understand the processes of identity formation. I chose these concepts to position my research in relation to other studies concerned with issues of identity formation, as well as to help me to conceptualise my main findings within a conceptual logic and direction (Charmaz 2006). The concept of cultural capital helped me to frame the children's social conditions, such family composition, occupation, etc., and cultural characteristics, such as indigenous language, as resources that help the children navigate the educational setting in different ways. The concept of habitus provided a frame to understand how certain social practices, perceptions, and beliefs were inculcated in the children from their early years. Finally, the concept of field was helpful in delimiting the social setting, in which the representations of identities were being expressed: school, playground, staff room, home, neighbourhood, or community of origin.

The category of "self-definition" was constructed by the children's perceptions regarding whether or not they consider themselves indigenous. Even though I recognise that the question is problematic for small children to reflect on, and the term indigenous is a colonial term that imposes a dominant power toward cultural minorities as homogeneous and monolithic, I asked the question to find out the awareness that

children have to belong to a particular ethnic group. I prompted the question within a context of reflection after we had discussed the indigenous language use within their families and only after the children felt more comfortable discussing their ethnicity with me as a researcher, mainly in the second or third interview.

Figure 3.4 Analytic coding frame



With this analytic coding frame it was easier to start the writing process, since each of the analytic themes served as the basis for the thesis chapters.

3.8 Triangulation, Validity and Reliability

Ethnographic enquiry requires the researcher to think carefully about triangulation techniques, ‘the checking of inferences drawn from one set of data sources by collecting

data from others' (Hammersely & Atkinson, 1995, p. 230), in order to help validate conclusions. In a sense, the stages that I followed for the data analysis were also very useful as triangulation techniques, because I was able to identify the patterns in the data on several occasions.

According to Holloway and Jefferson (2000, p.66), the researcher's subjectivity can also be used as a triangulation technique, which means my own experiences and personal histories should be taken into account when making interpretations of, and/or assumptions about, the data.

Most of the time, academic research is conducted in research teams. The interpretations of different researchers are also a triangulation technique that can help to validate the results. In the case of a PhD thesis, it is a difficult task to carry out a collective research process, due to issues of authorship. In my case, since I was part of the CIESAS team, I had the opportunity to discuss some of my results in a research meeting and share my interpretations with them. However, this meeting took place at a very early stage of my data analysis, and I was not able to present the results in a more rounded way at that time. Since this thesis has taken a long time to complete, I was able to corroborate my results with other Mexican research that has developed over the years (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000:67).

There are several approaches to the notion of validity in ethnographic research, mostly related to the epistemological paradigms to which researchers subscribe (Barriga, 2008; Czarny, 2006; Flores, 2007; Martínez Buenabad, 2008; Rojas, 2006). From my research framework, I drew on the concept of validity used in the critical tradition of research (Esiner, 1991; Fetterman, 1998; Lather, 1991; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1992, 1996; Scheurich, 1997; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Wolcott, 1975, 1994). Lather for instance, suggests the use of 'construct validity' to avoid theoretical imposition. According to Lather (1986), this can only be done through 'systematized reflexivity' that permits the researcher to be self-aware of how a priori categories have changed in relation to new data. Lather (1991) analyses the classic, and widely referenced, ethnography conducted by Willis (1977) and finds that 'construct validity' is a weak point in Willis's research because 'there is no clear sense of how researcher perspectives were altered by the logic of the data. With no account of this,

one is left viewing the role of theory in this research (which is so strongly shaped by a priori conceptions) as being non-dialectical, unidirectional, and an imposition that disallows counter-patterns and alternative explanations' (1986). In trying to avoid this problem, I kept a reflective journal during my time in the field, so that I could be aware of my own preconceptions, contradictions, and understandings, in order to contrast those with the data collected.

An important point regarding the reliability of my research has to do with reporting the transcripts in both Spanish and English. Owing to word limitations, I was not able to include both versions within the text; however, I always included the original transcript in a footnote. The purpose of this was twofold: to try to be as loyal as possible to what the research participants expressed, and secondly, as a political gesture for the equality of language representation.

3.9 Ethics

This research project followed the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research of the British Educational Research Association (Lather, 1991:67) and I have recently reviewed the latest version (2004), with which I fully comply. I also revised the Research Ethics Review Checklist of the Faculty of Education (See Appendix 11). I am aware that research involving children raises sensitive ethical issues. When conducting ethnographic research, several ethical considerations may arise. Firstly, it is expected that the researcher will inform participants and gatekeepers about the objective of the research. However, there is always the dilemma of how much information to tell them in order to preserve the integrity of the research and not to invalidate it by influencing responses or causing reaction in the participants (BERA, 2011). In my research, I decided to explain my interests to the schools in terms of understanding the cultural diversity in the school environment. I had to be very careful not to bring up any issue that could make the school staff feel threatened in relation to indigenous children or judged in their practice. This was also the case when relating to the families who might feel uncomfortable being questioned about their migration experiences or about some of their family practices. As Apple (Fetterman, 1998) suggests, the researcher can also participate in and reproduce power relations.

The issue of informed consent was a sensitive area that needed careful attention, especially when undertaking research with children. Children must be informed of the purposes of the research, as well as the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses (Greene and Hill, 2005, p.66). I worked only with those children who opted to participate in the research (opt in). Informed consent was constantly negotiated rather than the mere static process of signing a form at the beginning of the research. However, I did explain the details of the research in a letter at the beginning. I followed an on-going approach to informed consent in which the children always had the chance to opt out from the research, reminding them every time I had contact with them of their chance to say no.

Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured during the conduct of the research (1995). Children very much liked to know that they were part of a research project and that they could say whatever they wanted to, confident that nobody would know their identities. On several occasions, I discussed this aspect with the children and I was very careful to manage the information that the children shared with me. In the research report that I submitted to schools, I used pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity of the informants. In the visual material, such as the photographs, I ensured that the children's faces were not identifiable.

I found it very difficult to avoid the tendency of making judgments during my fieldwork, especially when encountering situations that I might perceive as racist or sexist. This was a tension that was very difficult to overcome when adopting a critical and emancipatory perspective, because, on the one hand, I wanted to uncover inequalities, but on the other hand, I also wanted to be able to understand the structural constraints within which teachers are living. I had to acknowledge the limitation of their structural environment and try to understand the influences that might be having an impact in the schooling experiences of indigenous children. I tried to avoid being judgmental of the teachers or expect them to be critical of their own practices. In the analysis I take into account the structural constraints and acknowledge that the view I bring to the field is a view from 'above'; a view that is limited to those of us who are privileged and who judge reality from a Western academic perspective.

3.10 Summary

As was discussed in this chapter, critical ethnography was the guiding methodology of this research project, informed by theoretical approaches that questioned power dynamics, social discourses, and deficit perspectives when conducting research with minority groups. In addition to describing the stages and procedures that took place during my time in the field and in the process of data analysis, it also aimed to show the daily struggles and contradictions that took place in the process of ‘doing’ research. I strongly believe that reflexivity must be embedded in every aspect of the research process. What I have learned from the experience is this: just as the reality of our daily lives can be contradictory, conflicting, and unpredictable, so too is research.

The next chapter will present the analysis of the children’s data in relation to the processes of ethnic identity formation as well as the dynamics at the school level. Section 2 of the thesis presents the data of indigenous children’s identities in relation to their mother tongues and other attributes that they considered relevant to their ethnicity, such as the attachment to the communities of origin of their parents, as well as their cultural traditions and values. Section 3 focuses on indigenous children’s schooling experiences and the ways in which the school community is responding to a multicultural environment.

Part Two: Processes of ethnic identity formation

Chapter Four. Ethnic identity formation: language use

Integration into a single 'linguistic community', which is a product of the political domination that is endlessly reproduced by institutions capable of imposing universal recognition of the dominant language, is the condition for the establishment of relations of linguistic domination.
(Bourdieu, 1991, p. 46)

4.1 The power of the dominant language

The multicultural nature of Mexico, with the existence of 65 indigenous languages, was not constitutionally recognised until 1992. In 2001, the General Law of Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples gave indigenous languages the status of national languages. However, the mechanisms for implementing the use of indigenous languages in public life are very limited, influenced by a strong heritage of racial prejudice and discrimination against indigenous cultures. Although indigenous languages were given the status of national languages with the same importance as Spanish, many Mexicans still refer to them as 'dialects'. The word 'dialect' is often associated with negative stereotypes of linguistic inferiority. As Chamoreau argues: 'The word *dialect* presents a pejorative value to signal a social and political hierarchy; although in linguistics it is used to designate the variations of a language'⁴ (Chamoreau, 2007:142). In Mexico, according to the National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI, 2008), there are 364 dialectical variations that, for political and social policy purposes, should also be considered languages. However, this linguistic capital of indigenous peoples is not recognised within the forces of the global economy, as Devy argues:

'Over the last two centuries, thanks to the desires triggered by colonialism, imperialism and globalisation, the languages of the world appear to have been distributed into two clear categories, the languages of knowledge and the languages of the indigenous, thus turning everything indigenous into non-knowledge (Devy, 2016, p. 3).

⁴ My translation; the original text reads 'La palabra *dialecto* presenta un valor peyorativo para marcar una jerarquización social y política; no obstante en lingüística designa variantes de una lengua'.

In this way, indigenous languages become a subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995) within the mainstream society. The use of the dominant language and its relationship with the market forces, as Bourdieu argues is the language of the state that 'becomes the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured' (1991, p. 45). In this way, policy towards indigenous languages has not been a priority among linguistic policies in Mexico, it has rather been a continuation of colonialism.

Although ethnic identities are more complex than the use of a specific language, the data shows that language use is a recurrent category for indigenous children. Five main patterns appear in the data that help in the understanding of the ethnic identification of indigenous children:

- a) **Use of indigenous language** within the family (between parents, with parents or grandparents or between other family members)
- b) **Self-definition** as indigenous (when children answered to the question: do you consider yourself indigenous?)
- c) **Kinship** (the heritage of grandparents and parents)
- d) **Place of origin** of their parents and the **attachment to their communities** of origin
- e) **Reflexive identification**: when children did not recognise themselves until there was a linguistic detonator (question or reflection in the conversation) that made them change their mind and later on, identified themselves as indigenous.

The analysis of this second part of the dissertation is divided into these five categories. This chapter gives account of the **use of indigenous language** in children's contexts (school, family and communities of origin). Chapter 5 discusses the categories of self-definition, kinship, place of origin and what I call 'reflexive identification', meaning the processes of affirmations and denials that children expressed at different moments of the fieldwork regarding their ethnic identification.

4.2 Use of indigenous language

Indigenous languages are disappearing at a rapid rate. Many scholars across continents have argued that:

‘[T]he culture and the imaginative expression of the indigenous communities all over the world are in a phase of rapid depletion, as they are surrounded by marked forces indifferent to diversity, states unwillingly to protect and safeguard them and forms of knowledge that look upon the knowledge of indigenous as being obscure’ (Devy, 2016, p. 1).

Bodra (2016) argues that two languages die each month and in the next 100 years, more than half of today’s languages will disappear, especially the most vulnerable ones such as the indigenous languages; and with the languages, the knowledge constructed by peoples over centuries will also disappear. The main research aim of this thesis is to understand the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in relation to their schooling experiences within these contexts that seem indifferent and unwilling to protect languages and ethnic identities. Language and ethnicity become central in this analysis, as they integrate many performed and veiled characteristics of how children embody their ethnic identities; this chapter attempts to highlight these dynamics.

This chapter presents an analysis of the levels of proficiency reported by the children. The levels of language proficiency of indigenous children reveal that their mother tongues are in real danger of disappearing. The data has been analysed and grouped looking at three levels of language use:

1. Children who said they understand and/or speak in their parents’ language;
2. Children who said they understand and/or speak some words in their parents’ language;
3. Children who said that are not able to communicate effectively in their parents’ language.

Table 4.1 Patterns on the use of indigenous languages (IL) within families

	Purepecha (n=13)		Totonaco (n=3)		Mazahua (n=1)	Nahuatl (n=5)		Total (n=22)	
	B n=7	G n=6	B n=2	G n=1	G n=1	B n=2	G n=3	B n=11	G n=11
Grandparents live and speak IL at home	3	4	0	1	1	0	2	3	8
Father speaks IL	3	2	2	0	1	2	2	7	5
Mother speaks IL	5	1	2	1	1	2	0	9	3
Parents speak IL to other family members	6	3	2	0	1	1	3	9	7
Children say they understand a few words in IL	5	3	2	1	1	0	3	7	8
Children say they feel ashamed when people know about the language of their family	3	0	2	0	1	1	1	6	2
Children are motivated to learn the IL in order to communicate with other family members	2	3	0	0	1	1	2	3	6

There are limitations in using a self-reporting approach to establish the proficiency levels of these children in their mother tongues, but there is no more accurate way to measure them. In addition to this, some children are undergoing a process of defining their own ethnic identity, and denying or recognising the use their parents' language might be part of the process of re-defining themselves as indigenous, as will be shown during different conversations with them in the course of the fieldwork.

Although fluency is a very ambiguous term, the data shows that none of the indigenous children are 'fluent' in their parents' languages. None of them said they felt comfortable speaking in their parents' languages. Fifteen of them (68%, seven boys and eight girls) understood or spoke some words in their parents' languages, and the remaining 32% reported that they neither understood nor spoke their parents' language. This language loss is a product of unequal power dynamics, as Dorian (1998) explains:

‘[...] it's relatively rare for a language to become so exclusively tied to prestigious persons and high-prestige behaviours that ordinary people become too much in a awe of it to use it or are prevented by language custodians from doing so. By contrast, it's fairly common for a language to

become so exclusively associated with low-prestige people and their socially disfavoured identities that its own potential speakers prefer to distance themselves from it and adopt some other language' (Dorian, 1998: 3).

During the first set of interviews, most indigenous children felt uneasy when talking about their parents' languages, either by saying that they did not know how to speak it very well or by explaining how their parents were too busy to teach them how to speak it. As will be discussed in the following chapters, schools are not a secure setting for children to talk about their language use.

Even though all indigenous children are regularly exposed to an indigenous language at home, there are social and economic pressures that undermine their learning process; most of the children in the study understood some words that their parents spoke, but were not able to maintain a conversation in the language. As Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco argue:

'[t]o see language as a mere tool for communication is to miss its deep affective roots. By losing competency in the language of origin, the child of immigrants may also lose much of the sustenance that the culture of origin provides' (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 106).

The following sections of analysis are divided according to the children's social field: home, communities of origin and neighbourhoods. The school was not a field found to be related to language use; on the contrary, children seem to avoid and deny their families' indigenous language when they are in school, as will be discussed in the next sections.

4.3 The field of home

'They speak normal: Spanish': Ana Rosa

Within the data, there are many examples of language loss among indigenous children living in the cities. Their parents are the first generation that migrated and in many cases, they have forgotten their mother tongues; in most cases, only grandparents are fluent. Sometimes indigenous children do not know the name of the language of their parents, and they refer to it as 'speaking differently'; that is the case of the families of

Ana Rosa (5th grade) and Acuamaryn (6th grade), originally from the Purepecha community of Sicuicho, Michoacan.⁵

Ana Rosa and Acuamaryn are sisters, but they reported different levels of language proficiency at different times. In the initial questionnaire, Ana Rosa said that neither of her parents spoke a language other than Spanish. On one occasion, her teacher introduced me to some girls whose families were from Michoacán, including Ana Rosa and Acuamaryn. During the initial stages of the fieldwork, when I applied the sociolinguistic questionnaire, Acuamaryn omitted to mention that her mother spoke another language besides Spanish and said that her father did not speak another language either. However, during our interviews they shared with me a different picture.

Table 4.2 Ana Rosa and Acuamaryn: self-reported levels of proficiency in their parents' language

Name	Age	Father's language	Mother's language	Does not understand and/or speaks in mother tongue	Understands and/or speaks a few words in mother tongue	Fluent in mother tongue
Ana Rosa	10	Purepecha	Purepecha	Her parents speak mainly in Spanish because they say they forgot how to speak in Purepecha. She speaks only in Spanish.		
Acuamaryn	11	Purepecha	Purepecha		Her mother does not speak very well in Purepecha. Only her grandmother speaks a little. She only understands a few words.	

Luzma: Do they speak another language in Sicuicho?

Ana Rosa: **It's called like Tarasco**

Luzma: Do your parents speak?

Ana Rosa: Mm, only my Mum a little

Luzma: And your father does not [speak]?

⁵ The name Sicuicho refers to a 'land of brave warriors' (SEP, 2006, p. 99). The history of the community, before colonial times, says that they were a commercial nomad community, and later became land of Purepecha warriors, with the objective of defending their territory against the Mexica group. As a consequence of the crisis of the agricultural sector, many people from Sicuicho emigrated to the cities of Guadalajara, Uruapan, Morelia, Zamora and many places in the United States; for this reason, there has been a decrease in the demographic growth of the community since many people do not go back (SEP, 2006).

Ana Rosa: Yes, he knew it but I think that, **over time, he forgot, my Mum still [knows] a little**

Luzma: What language do they speak between them?

Ana Rosa: **Normal**, Spanish

The fact that Ana Rosa considers that Spanish the normal language to be spoken and she does not mention their mother's tongue (she calls it 'that language'), shows the dominance of Spanish in the context these girls are living in and a certain distance they feel from the Purepecha.

Luzma: Why do you think they don't speak in Tarasco to you?

Ana Rosa: I don't know, because they say that **they've forgot a little...**

Luzma: What about your grandparents?

Ana Rosa: [In the community] they speak both languages, Spanish and Tarasco...

Later in the fieldwork, Ana Rosa said that when her parents went to her grandmother's community, her mum spoke in both languages with her grandma and her aunts. I asked her whether her mum sometimes spoke in Purepecha to her and she said that she only used Spanish.

Ana Rosa: [My mum] says that it has been so long since she does not speak, and she does not know how to say almost anything, but my dad speaks in **that language...**

Luzma: And who does your father speak with?

Ana Rosa: I don't know, I think he sometimes speaks with some uncles, but he doesn't speak very often, he doesn't speak in **that language...**⁶

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

⁶ Luzma: ¿En Sicuicho hablan otra lengua? - Fabiola: Se dice como tarasco - Luzma: ¿Tus papás hablan? - Fabiola: Mm, nomás mi mamá poquito - Luzma: ¿Y tú papá no? - Fabiola: Sí sabía pero yo creo con el tiempo se le fue olvidando, mi mamá todavía poquito - Luzma: ¿Entre ellos qué idioma hablan? - Fabiola: Normal, español. Luzma: ¿Por qué crees que no te hablan a ti en Tarasco? - Ana Rosa: porque dice que ya se le olvidó poquito... - Luzma: What about your grandparents? - Ana Rosa: Allá hablan de las dos lenguas, español y tarasco [...] Ana Rosa: [Mi mamá] dice porque tiene mucho tiempo que no habla así, pues ya se le olvidó, y no sabe decir casi nada, pero mi papá sí sabe hablar de ese idioma. - Luzma: ¿Y tú papá con quién habla? - Ana Rosa: No sé, creo que a veces con unos tíos, a veces pero casi no habla, no habla de ese, de ese idioma.

Since the interviews were conducted at school, it might be possible that these girls wanted to hide their levels of proficiency in their mother tongues in order to go unnoticed within this field. I wonder what their answers would have been if the interviews had been conducted in Sicuicho. However, I do recognise a pattern of language loss that might be present in this family: the grandparents speak the language, the parents do not speak the language as the main language of use at home, and children only understand a few words and are confused about their own level of language proficiency. That situation might be explained by the following account by Acuamaryn:

Luzma: Do your parents speak Tarasco?

Acuamaryn: I think they do.

Luzma: And do they teach you how to speak?

Acuamaryn: **My mum doesn't speak very well; my grandma speaks** but my mum not very well⁷.

Purepecha, 6th grade, 11-year-old

'Stop talking in Tarasco': Alondra

In addition to the process of language loss that some indigenous languages are experiencing in urban settings, they also face the lack of social value. Silvia and Alondra are two sisters and cousins of Hugo and Juan. They all live in the same household with other 20 family members, where Purepecha and Spanish are both spoken. They live as a small community, share a common patio and each family has a separate room. Both grandparents speak Purepecha; Silvia and Alondra's father is also fluent as well as their aunt. In our first interview, Silvia said she did not speak or understand Purepecha, and Alondra explained how she was able to understand a few words because she used to sleep in the same room with her grandma who used to teach her some words in Purepecha before going to bed.

⁷ Luzma: ¿Tus papas hablan tarasco? – Acuamaryn: Creo que sí – Luzma: ¿Y te enseñaron a ti a hablar? – Acuamaryn: Es que mi mama no sabe bien, mi abuela sí sabe pero mi mama no bien.

Table 4.3 Silvia, Alondra, Hugo and Juan self-reported levels of proficiency in their parents' language

Name	Age	Father's language	Mother's language	Does not understand and/or speaks in mother tongue	Understands and/or speaks a few words in mother tongue	Fluent in mother tongue
Silvia	9	Purepecha	Purepecha	She does not speak or understand anything in Purepecha		
Alondra	12	Purepecha	Purepecha		She understands some words but she gets tired when her grandmother speaks in Purepecha. She understands very little of what they say.	
Hugo	10	Purepecha	Purepecha		Repeats words when he hears them. His parents speak all the time in Purepecha between them.	
Juan	9	Purepecha	Purepecha		He has a hard time trying to understand what his mother says. He knows a few words.	

Even though children are exposed to their mother tongues, they do not seem to be encouraged to communicate in any language other than Spanish. Using an indigenous language makes some children feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar when other adults speak the language, as Alondra explains:

Alondra: [...] We understand three or four words of what my grandma says, but not everything, my brother gets upset when my grandma is talking to him in Tarasco and [he says]: **'Stop talking in Tarasco'** and my sister understands more or less, and my other sister Silvia she doesn't understand anything.

Luzma: Why haven't you learned to speak?

Alondra: Because **there is almost no time**, my mum leaves at 8 in the morning and she arrives at 4 and then she starts preparing the food and my dad leaves also at 8 and he comes back like at 7 or 8 and eats, gets rest and falls asleep...⁸

Purepecha, 6th grade, 12-year-old

This might be an example of the routine of a family whose main language at home is Spanish. Alondra thinks that there needs to be an allocated time to learn Purepecha, as a

⁸ Alondra: [...] Nosotros entendemos unas tres o cuatro palabras de las que dice mi abuelita, pero no todo, mi hermano se enfada cuando mi abuelita le está hablando en tarasco, y mi hermano se enfada y dice: 'ya deje de hablar en tarasco', y ya mi hermana, mi hermana, casi más o menos entiende, y mi hermana Silvia casi no entiende nada. - Luzma: ¿Por qué ustedes no han aprendido a hablar? - Alondra: Porque casi no tienen tiempo, mi mamá se va como a las 8 de la mañana y llega como a las 4 y luego se pone a hacer la comida y mi papá se va también a las 8 y ya regresa como a las 7, 8 y come, se acuesta y se duerme...

systematic task, because it does not happen naturally as a means of communication with her parents. The lack of social value, discrimination and the hectic dynamics of labour life that indigenous peoples have in urban settings appear to be prohibiting the possibilities of reclaiming the linguistic proficiency of these children.

‘I don’t like how they make me feel’: Monica

Monica is another of the children who feels uneasy when her family speaks in Purepecha. Monica is in 5th grade and her family is also from Sicuicho, Michoacan, but Monica was born in Guadalajara.

Table 4.4 Monica’s self-reported levels of proficiency in their parents’ language

Name	Age	Father’s language	Mother’s language	Does not understand and/or speaks in mother tongue	Understands and/or speaks a few words in mother tongue	Fluent in mother tongue
Monica	11	Purepecha	Purepecha	Her parents speak a little. Her aunt speaks fluently but she does not like to hear her speaking, it makes her feel ‘weird’. She does not speak anything.		

In our first conversation, Monica said that she did not like it when her parents spoke in Purepecha:

Luzma: Do you like it when [your aunt] talks with them?

Monica: **Not quite.**

Luzma: Why?

Monica: I don’t know, **I don’t like how they make me feel.**

Some children like Monica did not feel comfortable with not being able to understand what adults were saying; they felt ‘out of the game’, as will be shown in the case of Lilia, and some children who were constantly exposed to the indigenous language learned and understood conversations: they reported feeling proud that adults could no longer talk in ‘secret’.

‘She only speaks where there is a visit’: Hugo

The use of indigenous language is directly linked to the collective habitus of the communities of origin; as Hugo expresses in the following conversation, his family used Spanish unless there were adults visiting from the communities:

Luzma: And what language do your parents use to communicate between them?

Hugo: Only Spanish.

Luzma: And when do they use Tarasco then?

Hugo: Only my mum knows how to speak, **she only speaks when there is a visit, like my aunts**, because some of them only speak Tarasco, and that's how she communicates with them and with my grandma Cata, or with a cousin who speaks Spanish and Tarasco.

Luzma: And do you understand?

Hugo: No, when they speak **I want to play and like I repeat the words and they just start laughing**.

Luzma: And why don't they teach you to speak Tarasco?

Hugo: No, it is like, no, like, **we have not learned because they speak and speak every day and we don't learn well**, because the words are a little more tangled than English, so we don't learn.⁹

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

Hugo said in the initial questionnaire that his mother spoke Tarasco, although his teacher did not recognise him as indigenous. He said that both of his parents were from Michoacan and his grandparents spoke Tarasco, but only his mum spoke it and his dad did not speak it very well. He said he was able to understand some words, like 'tortilla = ichuskuta'. He would like to learn more because he wanted to understand what his mother was saying when she talked to his uncle and to his grandma. He had a cousin who spoke both languages and would start talking in Spanish but finish in Tarasco. He

⁹ Luzma: ¿Y tus papás en que idioma se comunican entre ellos? - Hugo: En español nada más - Luzma: ¿Y cuándo hablan Tarasco entonces? - Hugo: Nomás mi mama sabe hablar con, nomás habla cuando llega una visita así mis tías, como unas saben hablar nada más Tarasco así se comunica con ellas y con mi abuela Cata, abuelita o con un primo mío que habla Español y Tarasco. - Luzma: ¿Tu les entiendes? - Hugo: más o menos. - Luzma: ¿Tu no hablas? - Hugo: No, nomás cuando ellos hablan quiero jugar y como que les repito las palabras y nomás se empiezan a reír. - Luzma: ¿Y por qué no te han enseñado a ti a hablar en Tarasco? - Hugo: No, pues cómo se llama, no si no que nosotros no nos hemos enseñado porque ellos como hablan y hablan todos los días y nosotros no aprendemos bien, como así con las palabras como un poco más enredadas que ingles, entonces casi no aprendemos.

did not consider himself indigenous, because he did not speak the language well, but he identified his grandparents and his mother as indigenous.

‘My dad doesn’t like to speak in his language’: Pamela

Pamela was a nine-year-old girl whose father was a Purepecha speaker. Her mother was born in Jalisco. When Pamela visited the community of her father, she played with girls who spoke Purepecha, but sometimes she did not understand them, although they communicated by signs and managed to have a good time. Sometimes she just played with other children there and they did not talk to each other, and that made her feel lonely.

Table 4.5 Pamela’s self-reported levels of proficiency in her parents’ language

Name	Age	Father’s language	Mother’s language	Does not understand and/or speaks in mother tongue	Understands and/or speaks a few words in mother tongue	Fluent in mother tongue
Pamela	9	Purepecha	Spanish		Her father speaks in Purepecha and she understands some words but her mother does not like it because she thinks they are saying bad words.	

Her father insisted that she needed to learn Purepecha so that she could understand people when she visited the community, but she wanted to learn English first. In our second interview, Pamela said that her father did not like to speak Tarasco to her because ‘he feels weird’ talking in a different way to her.

Pamela: **My dad doesn’t like to speak in his language.**

Luzma: Why is that?

Pamela: I don’t know, **he says that it is very rare to talk in a different way**, that he doesn’t like it¹⁰.

Purepecha, 4th grade, 9-year-old

On the other hand, Pamela’s mother said that she should not be asking for a translation because she did not want Pamela to learn Tarasco. She thought that, when people were

¹⁰ Pamela: Nomás no le gusta hablar de su idioma. – Luzma: ¿Por qué no le gusta hablar? – Pamela: Sabe, dice que se le hace muy raro hablar de otro modo, dice que no le gusta.

talking in Tarasco, they were probably saying bad things. As Vazquez Leon (2007) found in his ethno-methodological experiment with agricultural Purepecha workers in Jalisco, the reaction of the *mestizo* population to the indigenous language is usually to think that they are uttering incomprehensible insults and ‘bad things’. Getting familiar with listening to other languages and not feeling uneasy ‘for not being part of game’ is not an easy exercise in Mexican society. Despite the many indigenous languages existing in Mexico, the Spanish conquest eradicated their use in the daily life of cities and they are now reserved to communities that are mainly indigenous.

Pamela lived within a contradictory habitus at home; on the one hand, her father did not feel comfortable speaking in Purepecha, and on the other, her mother did not like her to learn Purepecha. Pamela wished to learn English first, as she explained, as her mother’s aspirations were focused on popular American culture:

Luzma: And would you like to learn English?

Pamela: Yes

Luzma: What would you like first: English or Purepecha?

Pamela: Yes, **English first, because many people speak English**. My mum says that it is beautiful, and it has Disney, but it might be too expensive¹¹.

Purepecha, 4th grade, 9-year-old

‘My mum doesn’t want to teach me Nahuatl’: Lilia

Lilia’s mother made the decision to not teach Nahuatl to their children, to avoid the painful experiences the parents had when arriving in Guadalajara.

Lilia: ... but **my mum doesn’t want to teach me Nahuatl**... because she says that maybe we’ll forget Spanish and it is very hard to learn Spanish¹²

Nahuatl, 6th grade, 11-year-old

¹¹ Luzma: ¿Te gustaría aprender inglés? – Pamela: Sí – Luzma: ¿Qué quieres aprender primero, inglés o Purepecha? – Pamela: Sí, primero inglés, porque muchos hablan inglés. Mi mamá, mi mamá que está bonito eso, de que sale Disney y de eso, pero dice que a lo mejor cuesta muy caro.

¹² Lilia... pero mi mamá no me quiere enseñar Nahuatl... dice que porque a lo mejor se nos olvida el español y es muy difícil aprender el español

However, the exposure to Nahuatl in her everyday life had taught Lilia to understand some words through socialisation with her relatives who visit them, as Lilia explained:

Luzma: Did you hear your aunts speaking [Nahuatl] at your home [when they were visiting]?

Lilia: My aunts were here and they spoke like that, so **we did not understand, but now we understand... they can no longer speak in secret** [...] since I was little, my aunts went to my home and spoke [Nahuatl], they talked about things like something happened to X and Y left her and so...¹³

Nahuatl girl, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Lilia is an example of how other indigenous children learn indigenous languages as part of their daily lives, but within asymmetrical conditions compared to Spanish. Many parents decide to sacrifice indigenous languages for children to have a smoother transition into the school system; however, children such as Lilia feel excluded from family's conversations and they make an effort to learn in order to understand their families' worlds.

Sending the children to school is an economic sacrifice for most indigenous families. Indigenous children often talked about their parents' difficulties in paying for the extra expenses such as uniforms and school utensils for primary and secondary school:

Lilia: My father never allows me [to work]. [He says] that I shouldn't because I am little, that **I should keep studying**... I've told him that [I could work] at least when I am on vacations but he doesn't allow me to... [They want me to have] a career but my father said that maybe they won't send my sister, the oldest one, to high school because they don't have [money]... she just started first grade [of secondary school] but she will start second grade, I am also starting [secondary school] too, they don't know how they are going to do...¹⁴

¹³ Luzma: ¿Tú oías hablar a tus tías en tu casa entonces [cuando estaban de visita]? - Lilia: Estaban mis tías y hablaban así para que no entendamos, pero ya entendemos... ya no pueden hablar en secreto [...] desde chiquita mis tías iban a la casa y hablaban, así hablan cosas que a fulanito de tal le pasó esto y zutanito la dejó y así [...]

¹⁴ Lilia: Nunca me deja mi papá [trabajar]. [Me dice] que no, porque estoy chiquita, que debo seguir estudiando... le he dicho que nomás de vacaciones pero no me deja... [Quieren que haga] una carrera pero dice mi papá que a lo mejor a mi hermana la más grande no la meten a la prepa porque no tienen...

The decision to drop out of school is not only a matter of the children's lack of willingness to continue studying. Even though the Mexican Constitution requires that public education is free and mandatory, most families face prohibitive expenses with the 'voluntary' fees at the beginning of the school year and the cost of the uniforms and transportation. These expenses are so considerable that many families have to make rational choices with their family resources:

Luzma: Is it very expensive to go to the secondary school?

Lilia: Well, a little because the two of us are going to start and then my little sister to kindergarten... [it's] the bus fares, and they have to buy me the whole uniform, because my sister only has one set [of uniform], one for physical education and one for the [regular] uniform. I also have only one set, but I won't be able to wear it anymore and they are going to buy one for me; and you should have the three things: pants, t-shirt, and jacket and with the other one: skirt, blouse and sweater and the socks, that's why maybe they won't send [my sister to high school].¹⁵

For some families, investing in six years of their children's basic education requires significant compromises. Even though parents motivate their children to keep studying, it seems that they do not see a real likelihood of many of them finishing a university degree. Most of the interviews showed that families struggle to send their children to secondary school, which, although 'free', entails the secondary costs of transportation, uniforms and textbooks that can make it impossible for them to cover all the expenses. If secondary education is difficult to achieve, getting into higher education is still more difficult, since only 1% of the indigenous youth have access to it, compared to 80% of

apenas entró a primero [de secundaria] pero ya va a entrar a segundo y como yo voy a entrar también, ya no saben qué hacer...

¹⁵ Luzma: ¿Es muy caro ir a la secundaria? - Lilia: Pues un poco porque vamos a entrar las dos y luego va a entrar mi hermanita la chiquita al kínder... [son] camiones, me van a comprar todo el uniforme porque no tenemos uniforme, porque mi hermana nomás tiene un cambio de deportes y otro de uniforme, yo también nomás un cambio, pero de este, pero por este ya no me va a servir y me van a comprar uno a mí y tienes que tener las tres cosas, el pants, la playera y la chamarra y del otro la falta, la playera y el suéter [...] Y a mi hermanita también le van a comprar lo mismo: la falda, la blusa y el suéter y los calcetines, por eso yo no tengo calcetines nomás tengo puros tines y por eso dice que a lo mejor no la meten...

youth living in urban cities (ANUIES, 2017). Children's aspirations do not seem to fit in with this scenario; their wishes are difficult to achieve. It looks as if children's aspirations were only the product of meritocratic discourses and a family desire that could not become real because of the system constraints. This symbolic violence exercised by the system is cruel to the children's aspirations because the system teaches them to aspire to middle-class occupations and at the same time, children are '[o]bliged by the negative sanctions of the school system to give up the academic and social aspirations that the system itself had inspired in them and constrained...' (Bourdieu & Champagne, 1999, p. 425).

'If [my mum] had taught me Totonaco, I wouldn't have understood Spanish': Marcos

The case of the Totonaco children presents interesting insights in terms of the decisions parents make to migrate to the cities in search of higher levels of schooling for their children. Within this process, it is important to note that learning Spanish is one of the most important means. Indigenous languages seem to be reserved for family and community spaces; learning Spanish is part of the goal, to become part of the labour force of the city.

Table 4.6 Totonaco children's self-reported levels of proficiency in their parents' language

Name	Age	Father's language	Mother's language	Does not understand and/or speaks in mother tongue	Understands and/or speaks a few words in mother tongue	Fluent in mother tongue
Marcos	11	Totonaco	Totonaco		Understands when his parents speak Totonaco and he knows some words.	
Luis Miguel	9	Totonaco	Totonaco		Understands when his parents speak Totonaco and he knows some words.	
Maritza	11	Totonaco	Totonaco		She understands when her parents speak Totonaco, but she speaks mostly Spanish. She likes speaking Totonaco.	

Marcos: [My mum] **said that if she'd taught me Totonaco since I was little I wouldn't have understood Spanish** very well and I would have had trouble at school, she says, you wouldn't have understood everything well, **that's why they didn't teach us Totonaco**, but there it goes more or less, my mum sometimes teaches me...

Luzma: Is she teaching you?

Marcos: Yes, she teaches me like she says, if I had a book like in the old [times], when she went to primary school of Totonaco, then I'd teach you, she says, but now there are almost no books like that, she says, but sometimes **she even writes in Totonaco, I don't know what she writes, I almost don't understand, my mum and my dad speak like that...**¹⁶

Totonaco, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Forty per cent of the indigenous children reported a desire to learn their mother tongues: they paid attention to adults' conversations, repeated some words in their languages, or asked their grandparents or other cousins in their communities of origin to teach them; however, they were living within asymmetrical social conditions in the cities that left no room to become bilingual.

'I am starting to learn': Diego

Diego was born in Guadalajara; his father was from Patzcuaro and his mother from Tzintzuntzan, Michoacan. They met there and migrated to Guadalajara because there were not enough jobs there. He says that his father understood Purepecha but did not speak very well, only when they had family visiting from Michoacán:

Table 4.7 Diego's self-reported levels of proficiency in his parents' language

Name	Age	Father's language	Mother's language	Does not understand and/or speaks in mother tongue	Understands and/or speaks a few words in mother tongue	Fluent in mother tongue
Diego	10	Purepecha	Understands a few words in Purepecha		Understands and speaks some words that his mother teaches him – his father speaks only when there are people visiting from his community.	

Diego: My mum [speaks]; **my dad understands but he doesn't speak much**

¹⁶ Marcos: [Mi mamá] dijo que si desde chiquito te hubiera enseñado en totonaco no te hubieras entendido muy bien con el español y en la escuela te hubieras hecho bolas, dice, no hubieras entendido bien todo, por eso no nos enseñaron totonaco, pero ahí va más o menos, me enseña a veces mi mamá... - Luzma: ¿Te está enseñando? - Marcos: Ajá, sí me enseña como dice, dice si tuviera un libro como los de antes, cuando ella iba a la primaria de totonaco, pues sí te pudiera enseñar, dice, pero ahorita ya casi no dice, porque ya casi no hay libros de esos dice, pero a veces hasta escribe así en totonaco o sea que sabe qué escribe, no le entiendo, así se pone a hablar mi mamá y mi papá de eso...

Luzma: And you?

Diego: No, **I am starting to learn**¹⁷

Purepecha, 4th grade, 10-year-old

In our second conversation, Diego said that his father did not like to speak Purepecha:

Diego: My dad doesn't speak, **he doesn't like to speak, and he just listens...**

He speaks but only **with his family there, with his friends**, but he listens to what my mum says,

Luzma: Does your mum speak to him in Purepecha?

Diego: Yes, and to us too.

This is another example where children, like Diego, are starting a learning process of their mother tongues. His mum speaks to him in Purepecha and he says he is starting to learn some words.

'I wish I could talk a little': Manuel

Manuel is another example of the linguistic learning process that some indigenous children are going through. He is a Purepecha boy in 3rd grade.

Table 4.8 Manuel's self-reported levels of proficiency in his parents' language

Name	Age	Father's language	Mother's language	Does not understand and/or speaks in mother tongue	Understands and/or speaks a few words in mother tongue	Fluent in mother tongue
Manuel	8	Purepecha	Purepecha		Speaks a few words.	

On one occasion, I asked Manuel whether his parents were indigenous, to which he reacted with surprise; he shook his head, then nodded and finally said 'Yes'.

Luzma: And you?

Manuel: **No, I am not.**

¹⁷ Diego: Mi mama; mi papá entiende pero no habla - Luzma: ¿Y tú? - Diego: No, apenas me estoy enseñando

Luzma: And your brothers?

Manuel: A little.

Luzma: And your brothers speak Tarasco with your mum?

Manuel: Yes, in Tarasco.

Luzma: And you?

Manuel: **No, I don't know** [...] my sisters understand, they only understand but they don't speak, they speak very little.

In our second interview, Manuel was not hesitant about the same question:

Luzma: So, Manuel, are your mother and brothers indigenous?

Manuel: Yes.

Luzma: Are you [indigenous] too?

Manuel: Yes.

Luzma: And do you understand a few words of Tarasco?

Manuel: No, **I wish I could talk a little** [...] I only know how to say tortilla.

Luzma: How do you say tortilla?

Manuel: Ichuskuta.

Luzma: How beautiful! And do you know another word?

Manuel: No, I don't.¹⁸

Purepecha, 3rd grade, 8-year-old

In our following conversations, Manuel seemed more relaxed and shared with me different narratives about the traditional festivities in the community of origin of his mother. He had not visited it, and did not know the name of the community. He said: 'I don't know, I ask my mum where she is from, and she only says that she is from Michoacán'. Both of his grandparents had passed away so they did not go very often any more. He was very thrilled to go for the first time to Michoacan to the baptism of his cousin during the school vacation, his parents had often told him that everything was beautiful there; however in our second interview, he was disappointed because they had cancelled the plan since his sister recently had a baby and they had to stay to take care of her.

¹⁸ Luzma: Oye Manuel este ¿tu mamá y tus hermanos son indígenas?- Manuel: Sí - Luzma: ¿Tú también eres? - Manuel: Ajá

Manuel did not feel comfortable sharing at school that his mum spoke Purepecha, he said that he felt ‘embarrassed’. He did not feel discriminated against in his neighbourhood, because almost everybody spoke in Purepecha. Manuel is an example of how indigenous children are constructing vulnerable and fragile identities, especially in contexts where expressing cultural differences might translate into segregation or discrimination.

4.3 The field of the communities of origin

The need to communicate with their family members when they are in their communities of origin is a crucial motivation for children to learn the indigenous language.

‘I just keep myself looking’: Ana Rosa

In the context of the urban indigenous populations, the pattern of language loss seems to be worsened once the grandparents no longer live in the communities of origin. The attachment of indigenous children to their communities is crucial to reinforce their desire to learn their mother tongue, as Ana Rosa expressed:

Ana Rosa: [I’d like to learn Tarasco] to know what they are talking about when we go to Michoacan, my grandma speaks a lot with my grandmothers and everybody there, and I don’t understand, **I just keep myself looking**,¹⁹

‘You have to learn so you don’t get mistreated’: Alondra

Luzma: And when your grandparents talk to you, in what [language] do they speak?

Alondra: In Tarasco.

Luzma: In Tarasco, and what about to Silvia?

Alondra: No, they speak **normal** to her, there are times that she does understand some words and sometimes she does not, and the one who does understand is

¹⁹ [Me gustaría aprender tarasco] para saber lo que hablan porque cuando nos vamos a Michoacán, mi abuelita habla mucho con mis abuelas y todos los de allá y yo no entiendo, me quedo así viendo.

my cousin, the other one, the one who goes to secondary school and my little cousin too is the only one who can understand a little. [...] I used to sleep with my grandma and she taught me [Purepecha] and I asked her: ‘what does this and that mean?’ and she told me, my grandma told me. She said: **‘you have to learn so when you go to there, you don’t get mistreated and you won’t know.** Like yesterday, that we didn’t have classes, when my grandma stays at my home, she was saying some words and we asked her ‘how do you say ‘pencil’?’ and she says ‘pencil’ and I say: ‘some things are said the same way’ and she says ‘yes’.²⁰

Purepecha, 6th grade, 12-year-old

In Alondra’s account it is possible to see the value of grandparents in the relationship they offer between their grandchildren and their communities of origin. Alondra’s grandmother gives importance to learning their mother tongue as a tool to defend themselves from getting mistreated within communities. As Devy argues, ‘a given language cannot be completely disassociated from the community that uses it. Quite logically, therefore, preservation of a language entails the preservation of the community that puts that language into circulation’ (2016, p. 4). Speaking their mother tongues is a competence that children need to have to access the collective habitus of the community. This is one of the centres of the ‘habitus tug’ (Ingram & Abrahams, 2016). Grandparents want their grandchildren to learn their language, whereas parents are more focused on children’s learning to navigate easily in the cities, even if this involves compromising their mother tongues. This means that children must develop a bicultural competence, to mobilise their cultural capital in different ways according to the norms of the field of the school and the field of the family. Both capitals, especially the one in the school, develop within profound systems of inequalities and power dynamics, becoming rather a subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995).

²⁰ Luzma: ¿Y tus abuelitos cuando te hablan a ti, ¿en qué te hablan? - Alondra: En Tarasco - Luzma: En Tarasco ¿y a Silvia también? - Alondra: No, a ella le hablan normal, hay veces que sí les entiende las palabras y a veces no, y la que sí entiende es mi prima la otra, la que va en la secundaria y mi primo también es el único que casi le entiende [...] Porque mi abuelita, antes como yo dormía con mi abuelita, y ella me enseñaba, yo le preguntaba: ¿qué significa esto allá y allá? Y ella me decía, mi abuelita me decía, me decía: ‘te tienes que enseñar para cuando te vayas para allá, porque capaz que te van a maltratar y tú sin saber’, y también cuando mi abuelita se queda ahí, y como ayer, ayer que no tuvimos clases, se quedó mi abuelita y ya nos estaba diciendo que cómo se decía esto y nosotros le preguntamos ‘¿cómo se dice esto?’ pues la otra vez que le pregunto ‘¿cómo se dice lápiz? Y me dice, me dice ‘lápiz’ y le digo unas cosas que se dicen igual y me dice ‘sí’.

Grandparents, as seen in Alondra's account, seem to be the main source for children to learn these languages. They are the historians of the families; they strengthen their cultural belonging through the oral tradition. For indigenous children like Alondra and Ana Rosa, the dominant language, Spanish, is the 'normal' language. It is not surprising that children attribute a sense of normality to Spanish since the positions of power around them – government officials, teachers, religious leaders – are all held by Spanish speakers. Spanish is the access key to the cultural capital of the cities, and is associated with a better economic life. As stated by Dorian, 'It requires enormous social and psychological self-confidence for any small group to insist on the importance of ancestral-language retention' (1998, p. 20). The social message that indigenous languages do not have sufficient importance seems to be very strong and therefore some indigenous children have also internalised these discourses that impede them from publicly valuing the richness of their own linguistic diversity. Most children in the study called their parents' languages 'dialect', 'different language' or referred to their parents as talking in 'a different way', as opposed to other people, like themselves, who talk 'normal' (meaning Spanish).

The fact that some children do not remember their parent's language is part of a historical process of language loss originated by the lack of recognition and prestige of their mother tongues during the times of the Spanish Conquest. Spanish, as the language of power, displaced indigenous languages. According to Dorian:

'In a stunningly short time both empires [Aztecs and Inkas] were brought low by their encounter with the better armed Spanish, who represented an expanding Old World power. Neither imperial language disappeared, but each survived with severely reduced social standing. Today, Nahuatl and Quechua are low prestige speech forms within the regions where they are spoken, and each is under some threat from still expanding Spanish' (Dorian, 1998, p. 4).

'He wants me to learn Purepecha so I can understand other children': Pamela

Pamela gives another example of the usefulness of indigenous languages when the children visit the communities of origin:

Luzma: And your dad wants you to learn Purepecha?

Pamela: Yes, **he wants me to learn.**

Luzma: What does he say?

Pamela: That I learn to speak Purepecha so **when I go again [to the community]** I can understand other children. But I tell him that I want to learn English first and then Purepecha, but my dad says that I learn Purepecha first and I say that **English first.**

Luzma: And does your father teach you?

Pamela: Yes, he says this and that, and I forget.²¹

[...]

Luzma: And when you go to Michoacán, how do you communicate?

Monica: **Some people talk like that, some talk like us.**²²

Purepecha, 4th grade, 9-year-old

‘Like us’ for Pamela means a sense of belonging to a group that speaks Spanish, and she wishes to learn English before learning Purepecha; the only benefit that she sees in learning Purepecha, as her father suggests, is to be able to communicate with other children when visiting the communities of origin so as not to feel lonely, as she argues in the following quote; however, this shows a conflicting process of Pamela placing English in the first place and Purepecha in the second.

Pamela: ...[I was usually] playing with some girls who are also from there and like when they talked I could understand more or less and I took a shower with her sister and they made me a [signal] to get into the shower and I did go into the shower too with their little sister in a little house like those [that are made] of only boards. Like I, I [felt] as if **I was feeling lonely because they didn’t**

²¹ Luzma: ¿Y tu papá quiere que aprendas Purepecha? – Pamela: Sí, quiere que aprenda – Luzma: ¿Qué te dice? – Pamela: que, que yo me enseñe a hablar Purepecha para cuando vayamos otra vez así me entienda con los niños, pero le digo que yo quiero aprender inglés y luego Purepecha, pero dice mi papá, me dice y me dice que aprenda primero Purepecha, le digo que no, que primero inglés. Luzma: ¿Y él te enseña Purepecha? – Pamela, eh, pues a veces me enseña mi papá, sí me dice esto y esto y esto, pero a mí se me olvida.

²² Luzma: ¿Te gusta como habla [tu tía] con ellos? – Mónica: Casi no. – Luzma: ¿Por qué? – Mónica: No sé, no me gusta cómo me hacen sentir. – Luzma: ¿Y cuando vas a Michoacán cómo te comunicas? – Mónica: nos hablan, unos hablan así, unos hablan como nosotros.

understand me, not even I could understand them, we only played, but we did not talk...²³

Purepecha, 4th grade, 9- year- old

Chamorean argues that by ‘naming, the dominant group imposes a denomination without paying attention to the historical, cultural and linguistic characteristics of the other, moved mainly by its ego’ (2007, p. 141). The dominant group also ‘categorises’, homogenises and evaluates the culture of the other constructing discourses that are sometimes a distorted picture, and with perverse effects; in this case, Spanish is not the only dominant language: the power of the English language as an aspiration of becoming part of the hegemonic group also plays a part in the contradictory process of identity formation of Pamela. By ‘grading’, the dominant group imposes an ideology imbedded in the politics of linguistic rights, such as deciding what must be the dominant languages and the social hierarchy of the minority languages.

Luzma: And what language do your grandparents use?

Pamela: Tarasco too.

Luzma: When you go, do you understand what they say?

Pamela: No, because they are so many, like [my father] has many siblings there and he speaks a lot and I almost don’t understand them.

Luzma: And what do you do when you don’t understand?

Pamela: Mmm, I only ask my dad what they are saying,

Luzma: And what does your mum say?

Pamela: No, like I shouldn’t be asking about that, because **my mum doesn’t like me to speak like that.**

Luzma: Why?

Pamela: I don’t know, it seems that she doesn’t like it, [she says that] sometimes, when they don’t understand you, they say bad words and nobody would notice it.²⁴

²³ Pamela: ...hablan puro así de tarasco y pues ahí mi abuelo se puso a bailar con mi hermanita [...] [yo me la pasaba] jugando con unas niñas que también son de allá y pues cuando hablaban yo les entendía más o menos y bañaban a su hermana y me, y me, y me hicieron así pa que me metiera y me metí a bañar también con su hermanita a una casita de esas de pura tabla. Pos yo como, como si me sintiera sola porque ellas no me entendían, ni yo les entendía, nomás jugábamos, pero no nos hablábamos...

²⁴ Luzma: ¿Y tus abuelos en qué hablan? - Pamela: También en Tarasco - Luzma: Y cuando tú vas allá, ¿les entiendes? - Pamela: No, porque ellos como hablan muchos, como allá tiene hermanos pues allá

Being able to communicate in the community of origin of Pamela's father seems to be an insufficient reason for her to value the language. She receives contradictory messages from her parents; sometimes her father wants her to learn but he does not feel comfortable teaching her; on the other hand, Pamela's mother does not like her to speak an indigenous language because of the impossibility of understanding what other people are saying to her child. This tension seems to confuse the girl to the point of preferring and valuing a language – English in this case - that is accepted by the majority.

'You go and they don't understand anything, so you have to study...': Ariagna

Ariagna was a 10-year-old girl whose parents had migrated from Atlacomulco, one of the 125 municipalities of the State of Mexico. The Mazahua population in this region is about 77,000, and the name of the language 'Mazahua' means 'deer'. Her mother migrated with her grandmother years ago because, as Ariagna explained, 'Even though it was beautiful [there], the place [they lived in] was very small, it was just one room where everybody slept'. I was able to identify her family as one in the most vulnerable economic conditions in the school. Ariagna invited me to go to her house one afternoon, so I was able to talk to her mother and I got to meet the rabbits that slept in her bed and made Ariagna very happy. Ariagna described her family's current occupations and the struggles they faced in the following extract:

Ariagna: My mum works in... cleaning like that... it is like she cleans the streets, I don't know how it's called, of, of... she works cleaning like that, she cleans the tiles that are glued to the floor, she cleans in [...] in Plaza del Sol...
[My grandma] works in avenues because she didn't get a job, that's why, my granddad used to work in making clay cups, but since, I don't know why he got fired, but he was fired and now he works in avenues... I haven't gone [to the

habla mucho y pues casi no les entiendo muy bien. - Luzma: ¿Y qué haces cuando no les entiendes? - Pamela: Mmmm, pues nomás le pregunto a mi papa qué dicen. - Luzma: ¿Ah, sí? ¿y tú mama qué dice? - Pamela: No, pues me dice que no ande preguntando de eso, porque a mi mama no le gusta que hable así. - Luzma: ¿Por qué no le gusta? - Pamela: No sé, parece que no le gusta, que porque a veces así, cuando no te entienden así, dices malas palabras y nadie te entiende.

avenues] because I help my sister with the household chores, [...] **we used to go on Saturdays to cooperate**, or to sell tunas or chewing gums or sweets...²⁵

Mazahua, 4th grade, 10- year- old

Ariagna's quote shows what other researchers had pointed out as one of most salient elements of the Mazahua collective identity: *comunalidad* or the orientation towards communal organisation. Paradise and Robles (2016), two Mexican researchers, have studied the Mazahua communities for more than four decades. They argue that, from a sociocultural perspective, the Mazahua culture has a strong orientation towards a collective way of life. From their research in schools in Mazahua rural communities, they argue that schools can be a means to empower or silence voices, and in their research they found that:

‘schooling became a process that empowered Mazahua ‘voices’. As an indigenous people, they were able to effectively legitimise sociocultural practices often ignored or misrepresented within the predominantly mestizo-oriented national context’ (Paradise & Robles, 2016, p. 74).

Luzma: Do your teachers and classmates know that you speak Mazahua?

Ariagna: Yes, some of my classmates.

Luzma: And what do they tell you?

Ariagna: That I should say, **but I feel ashamed [...] my mother doesn't [feel ashamed] because [she] is used to [speak] but I do, I do feel ashamed...**²⁶
[...]

Luzma: Why do you feel ashamed about speaking Mazahua?

Ariagna: I don't know, it's because...**like I wouldn't feel embarrassed if I'd learnt to speak like that**, I, I, I believe that you wouldn't feel more embarrassed

²⁵ Ariagna: Mi mamá trabaja en... en limpiar así... es como que limpia las calles de cómo se llama, de... de ...trabaja en limpiar así, limpia los azulejos así que están pegados en el piso, los limpia en Paraísos, en este, Paraísos del Sol, este, en Plaza del Sol, ahí limpia... [Mi abuelita] trabaja en avenidas porque es que como no se metió a un trabajo, por eso, este mi abuelito trabajaba en hacer vasos de barro...pero como es que no sé por qué lo despidieron, pero lo despidieron y ya trabaja en avenida... [Yo] ahora no he ido [a la avenida] porque es que les ayudo a mi hermana a hacer el quehacer, es que los sábados íbamos a cooperar o si no a vender tunas o si no chicles o paletas...

²⁶ Luzma: ¿Tus maestros y tus compañeros saben que hablas mazahua? - Ariagna: Sí, a mis compañeros... algunos - Luzma: ¿Y qué te dicen? - Ariagna: Pues que diga pero me da pena [...] a mi mamá no, a ella no porque ya están acostumbradas pero a mí sí, a mí sí me da pena...

and that's why, when I, I grow up and I also learn to speak like that, I will also have to work on something, like worker or teacher or something like that.

Luzma: So, you have to learn Mazahua in order to do that?

Ariagna: I don't know, because, yes, **if you go there to my town, if you go and they don't understand anything and you have to study and learn like that.**²⁷

Mazahua, 4th grade, 10- year- old

Ariagna's quote shows her desire to learn the language in order to be able to communicate with the people in her community of origin, and as she says, that process of learning would empower her and also make her feel useful by contributing or working in the community in some way: as a teacher, for example. However, this indigenous linguistic capital seems to be not very useful in her current social field in the city. Even though she lives with contradictory messages regarding her mother tongue, Ariagna has the desire to keep building her collective identity through language:

Luzma: [And your brothers], do they speak Mazahua?

Ariagna: No, they don't want to.

Luzma: Why not?

Ariagna: Because **they don't like it.**

Luzma: And do you like it?

Ariagna: Well, so **I can understand the people when I go to the community.**²⁸

Mazahua, 4th grade, 10- year- old

Gabriela Czarny has studied the processes of identity formation of indigenous Mazahuas in Mexico City, and the dynamics of ethnicity within urban school contexts of children of immigrant parents (Czarny, 1995, 2006; Czarny & Martínez, 2013). She distinguishes between 'voluntary minorities' and 'involuntary minorities' to reflect on the dynamics of school success and argues, following the constructs of John Ogbu

²⁷ Luzma: ¿Por qué te da pena hablar Mazahua? - Ariagna: No sé, no es que... como que no me daría pena porque si ya aprendiera a hablar así, yo, yo, yo creo que ya no te diera más pena y por eso, cuando yo, yo crezca y, y también ya sepa hablar así, yo también voy a tener que trabajar en algo, así de así, como ser trabajadora de maestra o algo así de trabajo, así como trabajar. - Luzma: ¿Tienes que aprender Mazahua para eso? - Ariagna: No sé, no, porque, sí, bueno, si es que vas allá a mi mismo pueblo, si vas, este, vas y no entienden nada y tienen que estudiar y saber tener que aprender y así.

²⁸ Luzma: [Y tus hermanos] ¿hablan mazahua como tu? - Ariagna: No, ellos no quieren - Luzma: ¿Por qué no quieren? - Ariagna: Porque no les gusta - Luzma: ¿Y a ti sí te gusta? - Ariagna: Pues, para entender más a la gente cuando voy allá al pueblo.

(1991), that the principal factor for these minorities to be successful at school is the history of subordination and exploitation in relation to the mainstream society in which they are immersed. Ogbu (1991) argues that the expectations that minorities develop in their new societies are transmitted from one generation to another (Ogbu, 1991 in Czarny 2006). Czarny (2006) challenges the notion of ‘minorities’ and argues that new conceptions of school success are necessary in order to understand the fluidity and accommodation processes that immigrant children experience in the school setting. Czarny (2006) found that some Mazahua children did not want to be identified as such in their schools, and they asked their mothers to avoid using their traditional clothing when attending school meetings, as the following testimony shows:

Once, in a parents’ meeting at the school, my daughter saw that I was wearing my Mazahua clothing and she said to me: ‘Mum, don’t go to school like that, my classmates will see you and they’ll say that my mum is an Indian; it is better that my aunt Lucia goes’. In that moment [clarifies the informant] Lucia was not wearing our clothing, she was [dressed] normal, a blouse and a skirt, but I didn’t say anything and I went [to the school] as I was.²⁹

(Extract taken from Czarny, 2006, p. 247)

This extract shows the strategies that indigenous children use to fit into the mainstream society. This, as Czarny (2006) argues, cannot be translated into an identity loss, since identities cannot be studied in isolation, without the analysis of the cultures that are in contact and the power relationship between them. The stereotyping of these cultures within an urban setting has been publicly characterised by the figure of the ‘India María’, a television and film character who represents a Mazahua woman working as a street seller. Cristina Oehmichen argues that the ‘India María’

represents in a comic way the struggles of the Mazahuas on the streets, their conflicts with the police, the troubles they experience due to racist attitudes from the people of the capital, and the difficulties they have in speaking Spanish’ (my translation, Oehmichen, 2005:201).

²⁹ Una vez había una reunión de padres en la escuela y mi hija vio que estaba con mi ropa mazahua y me dijo: ‘mamá no te vayas así a la escuela, después mis compañeros te ven y me dicen que mi mamá es una india; mejor que vaya la tía Lucia’. En ese momento [aclara la informante] Lucia no estaba con la ropa de nosotros sino que andaba como normal, una blusa y una falda, pero yo no le dije nada y me fui vestida como estaba.

The characterisation of the 'India Maria' is stereotyped. In some circles, she is considered a resilient figure who has been able to overcome the difficulties of living in a non-indigenous society while 'maintaining' her ethnic identity (Oehmichen 2005). However, in non-academic circles, the term 'India Maria' is synonymous with ignorance, a lack of social or linguistic skills and symbolises some of the dress characteristics of the Mazahua indigenous women: braids, a *reboso* (shawl), and long skirts. Although the 'India Maria' might be a symbol of resilience, the character is used to negatively describe ethnicity and to homogenise indigenous peoples in the country.

Ariagna worked as street seller with her grandparents. They sold candies, flowers, or whatever articles they had on the corners of the main avenues of the city. Ariagna called this job 'working in avenues', and shared with me many stories of the dangers they faced when working on the streets; for example, the story of her aunt who was run over by a car one time; or when Ariagna and her cousin used to clean the windcreens of cars at the traffic lights; or when Ariagna felt thirsty and she took the ice from the buckets of canes that she was selling; or her maths calculations after her father asked her to sell the canes for 15 pesos instead of 12 and she thought they were very expensive and nobody wanted to buy them. At a very young age, she had plenty of knowledge about market needs, and she planned to buy flowers or other products for Mother's Day, Valentine's Day or Christmas.

The Mazahua people has been characterised since pre-colonial times as adapting cultural elements of other social groups in very subtle ways (Bertely, 1992; de Haan, 2009; Paradise, 1987); they developed a way of resistance that has been passed from one generation to the other in a process of in-culturation, where, as Paradise explains, there is an interaction between parents and children that she calls '*separate but together*' (Paradise, 1987), where children learn to behave in an autonomous way at the same time that they coordinate their actions with the community. 'The Mazahua people have an extraordinary capacity to live with external pressures without losing their Mazahua identity' (de Haan, 2009, p. 83).

4.5 The field of the neighbourhood

The neighbourhood is a social field where indigenous children are in contact with other indigenous languages not only their own. They live in a setting where Purepecha, Nahua, Mazahua and Totonaco families have settled, and children recognize this multicultural composition, as Diego and Ariagna explain:

‘She speaks another language that I don’t know’: Diego

Diego: There are some people, **where I live that only speak Purepecha and they don’t speak Spanish**. A woman who sells candies, and who sows over there, she **speaks another language** that I don’t know.

Purepecha, 4th grade

Ariagna: [In the 12 of March] **there are people who speak different languages**... I don’t know them, but they are different languages³⁰.

Mazahua, 4th grade

Lilia is another example of children who perceives a multicultural environment in their neighbourhoods. She says that her mother is very “comfortable and happy” when talking in Nahuatl with other neighbours; however as was explained earlier, Lilia’s mum rejected the invitation of her teacher to teach Nahuatl in the school. This situation shows the tensions between the field of the school and the field of the neighbourhood, where Indigenous children have experienced or have seen experiences of ethnic discrimination, as Luis explains:

Luis: **Some children make fun of me because of how I talk**; they live close to me. They say things to me and they make fun... The other day they made fun because I went out, I was going to buy an ice cream and they made fun of me. They told me “guachuchao³¹”... because they hear when [my parents] are

³⁰ Ariagna: [En la 12 de diciembre] otros hablan en otros idiomas... no sé [cuáles] pero son diferentes los idiomas

³¹ The word “guachuchao” was no meaning in Spanish, however it is referred by Luis as a way to babbling in a different language than Spanish.

talking: when [my dad asks my mum] to make some coffee and **they speak in their language** and they hear them³².

Nahua, 4th grade

This situation makes some children to avoid talking openly about their ethnicities in different fields: the school, and sometimes the neighbourhood too. The influence of the racist discourses of the mainstream society influence the way some children perceive themselves and this has an impact on their dis-identification (Skeggs, 1997) with their indigenous origins, as shown in Daniel's extract:

Daniel: I have seen people dressed like "La India Maria"... I say that they must be around here visiting... In the second school that I attended, there was a child who every time that he wanted to say a bad word, he would say it in Nahuatl, and we all laughed of how he spoke [...] **One day we were watching The India Maria** [in my house] and **my mum said to my dad "there you have your family"** and my dad only kept silence³³.

Daniel, 6th grade

Daniel's father is a Nahuatl speaker and married Daniel's mother in Guadalajara. Daniel has other siblings in Pachuca from his father's first marriage. For Daniel, it is difficult to understand the mixture of his identity because he has related ethnicity with poverty. This is the product of the media and social discourses that for centuries have portrayed indigenous cultures as backward and poor, as he explains:

Daniel: **[If indigenous peoples] came here [in the city], many people would make fun of me...** because of their way to speak, the way they dress, because they use sandals, I don't know... I think that it's because they are poor... they

³² Luis: Unos niños se burlan de cómo hablo, viven cerca de mí. Me dicen cosas y se burlan... La otra vez se burlaron de mí porque yo salí afuera, iba a ir a comprarme una nieve y se burlaron de mí. Me decían "guachuchao"... es que ellos oyen cuando [mis papas] están hablando o cuando le dice que haga un poquito de café hablan en su idioma y luego los escuchan.

³³ Daniel: Yo he visto personas vestidos como La India María, ahí por el Briseño... yo digo que deben venir de visita... En la segunda escuela en donde estuve había un niño que se llamaba Enrique y siempre que quería decir una majadería la decía en Nahuatl y nosotros acá nos reíamos de como hablaba [...] Una vez veíamos a La India María y luego llega mi mamá y le decía a mi papá "allá van tus familiares" y mi papá nomás se quedaba callado.

have houses made of cardboard... some of them live by the ring road, and also in the city centre, **I have seen** some of them dressed like that...³⁴

Daniel, 6th grade

Daniel's quote shows the conflict of identifying and dis-identifying with his indigenous origin at the same time. As Wade argues "the same person can be both included and excluded" (Wade, 2015, p. 1295). Racism is experienced and embodied by indigenous children within different social fields, even within their own families. Daniel's case also indicates how "race and class are intimately interwoven" (Wade, 2015, p. 1296).

4.6 Summary

In this chapter it has been possible to see how language use differs according to the field in which children are immersed. The home is a bilingual space, while the school was not even mentioned in the children's interviews as a space where indigenous language is used. The urban neighbourhood, by contrast, is a multicultural and multilingual space where children learn that there are other ways of expression, other languages, and other ways of communicating. The communities of origin, on the other hand, are 'fields of learning' where speaking their mother tongue is not only beneficial for them, but also a field where parents place their desires for their children to own that linguistic capital.

Martinez-Casas et al. (2004) found in their study of five schools in Guadalajara that indigenous children lived a process of asymmetrical bilingualism, that led to language loss. These children experienced a contradiction between the knowledge and cultural values they received at home and at school. They could not be considered bilingual, since the knowledge and use they had in both languages were not the same or of the same social value; however, they were bicultural, and they had an immense cultural capital that they used in a very strategic way according to their interests and needs, and the social field they were in. It seems that, for such children, school is not the place to mobilise their cultural capital as indigenous, but the communities of origin are places where they have the desire to mobilise the cultural capital of their families, through

³⁴ Daniel: Si llegaran aquí me echarían burla... por su forma de hablar, por su forma de vestirse, porque usan huaraches, no sé... yo pienso que es porque son pobres... tienen casas de cartón, ahí por el periférico hay unos y también en el centro veo a unos vestidos así, por la tienda de Sol

learning the language and the traditional activities there. The attachment to the communities of origin of their parents is a crucial factor to their sense of cultural belonging and therefore to the construction of their ethnic identity (Martínez - Casas et al., 2004), and as will be explained in the following chapters, there is a spectrum of attachment depending on the frequency and quality of visits that children make to the communities of origin.

Indigenous children show a pattern of language loss and the messages they receive from their parents are sometimes contradictory; some speak to them in their languages and express the parents' desire for the children to learn in order to be able to communicate when they go to their communities of origin, but in some cases, the parents themselves do not feel fluent enough in their languages to teach their own children; however, there are also messages that make children perceive that their languages are a subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995) that might be less useful than learning a second language such as English in the mainstream society.

Grandparents, as it was possible to see through the interviews, are a crucial element in the construction of the ethnic identities of these children and in the recovery of their mother tongues. Grandparents share a part of the cultural history that gives cultural sense to their origins and strengthens a sense of pride and belonging to their communities of origin. Schools should open up spaces for grandparents to share their cultural richness so that both indigenous and non-indigenous children learn from their experiences and understand the cultural background of indigenous children.

The term 'indigenous' is generalising and sometimes intimidating for the children. They identify themselves more with the name of their languages or the names of their communities of origin. One of the current demands of ethnic political and social groups in Mexico is to use the terms 'original peoples' (*pueblos originarios*), instead of indigenous; the term is important to reclaim identity; the terms 'Indians' or 'indigenous' carry a painful colonial history.

As will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, attachment to the communities of origin is a crucial element in the formation of ethnic identities. In the case of some indigenous families, almost all members have migrated to the cities and

there are not many opportunities for children to get attached to their lands; however, there are new ways of attachment within the new territories they have chosen to live in.

Chapter 5. Ethnic Identity Formation: Beyond Language

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to understand the complexities of the processes of identity formation among indigenous children. This is especially complex when conducting research with indigenous primary school children. Their identities are fluid and rapidly changing, and sometimes they take contradictory forms in relation to contact with other people and social fields. Identity formation at this stage of the children's life and in a school context allows us to understand that identities have to be studied always in relation to the other, within socio-historical contexts. As is suggested by De la Peña (1996), identities of indigenous groups must be understood in relation to the construction of the national identity, or the national culture, in order to unveil the power dynamics. Therefore, researching the dynamics of urban schools is key to understanding how indigenous children start defining themselves in relation to the national expectations of the 'Mexican citizen' (De la Peña 1996 in Czarny, 2006).

The first research question seeks to reveal the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in Mexican schools, especially in terms of their ethnic identification. The ethnic identity of indigenous children is more than fluency or use of their mother tongues (see Chapter 4). It would be a mistake to equate identity with language or with culture (Bartolome, 1997). Rather, it is the self-identification with a particular history or culture, and the belonging to a collective identity that forms a ethnic identity beyond the linguistic skills (Diaz-Couder, 1990).

This chapter presents an analysis of other aspects of ethnic identity that were present in the voices of indigenous children. Bartolome (1997) argues that identity is related to seven factors in the movements of political claims of indigenous peoples: language, territory, traditional clothing, lifestyle, history, economic system, parental identification, and political participation; all of those elements are part of their cultural capital. Analysis of the data revealed Bartolome's factors through the children's voices, except the political participation, since it was difficult to find this factor among young children. This chapter shows that some indigenous families have strong elements of parental identification and attachment to territory, either symbolic or geographical, that allow us

to see how identities go beyond fixed characteristics such as language or place of origin. It is divided into four categories: self-definition, kinship, attachment to the communities of origin, and the process of reflexive identification found in children's perceptions.

5.1 Self-definition

'I am between the two': Hugo

Hugo is aware of his indigenous collective habitus and he highlights the values that are important for him, although at the same time, the pulling forces of the *mestizo* groups impact on his identity. As he explains, he feels caught 'between the two':

Luzma: And how do you consider yourself, Hugo?

Hugo: **Almost like the two**, because I worry too much for my family, for my sister, for my brother, and sometimes I think, like, like my classmates play tough with me, I also tell them things, so **I am between the two**, indigenous and non-indigenous.

Luzma: And how are non-indigenous?

Hugo: They speak Spanish and they believe like, 'we don't understand you' and start saying things for your way of talking, like my classmates Juan and Maria, they make fun of me because I speak very loud and they say that they don't understand me anything and they start making fun of me.³⁵

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

³⁵ Hugo: ... los que no son indígenas te empiezan a decir, te empiezan a decir: "no, vete tú a tu lugar donde naciste eres un... piensan así cosas muchas así como, este, como mi mamá es indígena y dice que de chiquita ella trabajaba iba al molino y todo eso y yo creo que por eso, que desde chiquitos, desde chiquitos, desde los 5 años de edad los ponen a trabajar desde las 7 de la mañana, yo creo que porque tienen la, cómo se llama, la diferente forma de pensar como ellos piensan, en, cómo se llama, piensa mucho en su familia y todo eso, y los demás piensan, piensan en hacer, en hacer, cómo se llama, en hacer llorar a los demás y sentirse tristes. - Luzma: ¿Y tú como te consideras Hugo? - Hugo: Pues casi los dos, porque me preocupo mucho por mi familia, por mi hermana, por mi hermano y a veces pienso, cómo se llama, como se llevan mis compañeros mucho conmigo, yo también les digo cosas, y está entre los dos, entre indígenas y no indígenas. - Luzma: ¿Y cómo son los no indígenas? - Hugo: Que hablan español, y se creen que, cómo se llama, que no pues nosotros no te entendemos y que te empiezan a decir de cosas por la forma de hablar, como mi compañero Juan y María, se burlan de mí que porque hablo muy recio y que no se me entiende nada y se empiezan a burlar de mí

Hugo's account reflects the 'habitus tug' (Ingram, 2010) where he feels pulled in both directions between indigenous and non-indigenous identity. He seems to have the perception that the non-indigenous make the indigenous feel sad; they mistreat and bully. Hugo, on the other hand, seems to be adopting an indigenous identity as well, when expresses worrying about his family, in opposition to what *mestizo* people seem to do, who sometimes 'do not understand'.

'I am 50-50': Lilia

For Lilia, her ethnic identity seems to be associated to her mother's ethnicity. She gives herself a portion of her mother's heritage, a small portion in relation to other aspects that she has constructed as defence mechanisms in a racist society:

Lilia: A part of me [is indigenous] because my mum is... almost like 10% it's [indigenous] and the other 90% no, because my aunts and uncles don't speak like that [Nahuatl], then my grandparents only speak like that [Nahuatl] and then my father doesn't, so that's why I am 50-50, but I think I am in the middle between yes and no, because my aunts speak [Nahuatl] and my uncles don't...³⁶

Nahuatl girl, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Lilia's quote shows a conflicting process of ethnic identity formation. She seems to be looking for answers within her family's ethnicity to explain her own, first she described herself as 10% indigenous and then she changed her mind and gave a higher proportion when considering her grandparents' language; however, Lilia feels like she is 'in the middle'. These conflicts are originated in the unequal and discriminatory setting of the schools, where some children feel cautious about sharing their ethnicity, but also in the family, as Lilia expresses:

Lilia: I don't know, [my classmates] call everybody names and that's why I didn't want to tell them [that my mum speaks Nahuatl], but one day I don't know what they say to her, that if she spoke Nahuatl and I don't know what else,

³⁶ Lilia: Un parte de mi [es indígena] porque mi mamá sí es... Yo soy como 10 por ciento y el otro 90 no, porque mis tíos y mis tías no hablan así, y luego mis abuelos solamente hablan así y entonces mi papá no, por eso yo soy 50 y 50, pero yo creo que estoy en medio del sí y no, porque mis tías hablan y mis tíos no...

and then the teacher said to my classmates and my classmates asked me if it was true, [I said] yes... and then for a time they didn't say anything to me, well, like they haven't said anything to me...³⁷

Nahuatl, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Lilia's mother rejected the invitation of Lilia's teacher to go to the school and teach Nahuatl to the children. According to Lilia, the teacher offered a payment to her mum for helping with this activity, but her mother refused because 'she doesn't want to talk about that with anybody'. It seems that this resistance is only within the school setting, because Lilia says that her mother is very comfortable and happy when talking in Nahuatl with other neighbours. Wexler (1992:134) argues about identities being constructed 'in *defence* against social absences, not in welcoming acceptance'. Lilia has developed a mechanism of resistance by downplaying her ethnicity to avoid rejection by her classmates, similar to the way that her mother refused to participate at school.

5.2 Kinship

'We don't speak like that, but we are part of my mum anyway': Ana Rosa

Some indigenous children considered themselves to be indigenous like their parents, while others did not identify themselves as such because they were not born in the cities but still felt the lineage and connection with their family's roots, as Ana Rosa explains:

Luzma: If your parents speak Tarasco, are your parents indigenous?

Ana Rosa: **Yes.**

Luzma: And your siblings?

Ana Rosa: We don't speak like that, but **we are part of my Mum anyway.**

Luzma: Would you like your children to learn Tarasco?

Ana Rosa: Well, yes, **both languages.**

³⁷ Lilia: No se, es que ellos ponen apodos de todo y por eso no quise decirles [que mi mama habla Nahuatl], pero un día como mi mama no se que le dijeron o que, y dijo que sabía hablar Nahuatl y que sabe qué y luego el maestro les dijo a mis compañeros y mis compañeros me preguntaron que si era cierto, que si... y ya luego por un tiempo no me dijeron nada, bueno que diga ya no me dijeron nada...

This is the subjective dimension in the ethnic identification (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008), it is a personal choice and a desire to be part of a cultural group; this is reinforced by Ana Rosa's opinion about the next generation's nostalgic desire to be part of an indigenous group as well, it is a choice that embraces doubt and uncertainty:

Luzma: Would your children be indigenous too?

Ana Rosa: **I don't know**, I believe so...

Luzma: How do you know that a person is indigenous?

Ana Rosa: Well, for the **customs and for the names of the towns**, in fact, the teacher was talking about that the other day.

Luzma: Oh really, what did he say?

Ana Rosa: Like, how they can be indigenous, because of the lands and everything. Over there, they have big mountains; **they are the owners of the mountains there**. My grandma had a lot of lands, now she only has like three, two houses and a land where she takes the cows and a house where she lives...³⁸

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

This last part of the interview shows the structural dimension of ethnic identity (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008). Ana Rosa knows the history of her family, the economic and political struggles that her grandparents faced back in the communities, and how they ended up having less land and living in a situation of economic poverty; Ana Rosa recognises that at some point in history, indigenous peoples were the 'owners of those lands', which could be expressing a source of pride.

There is also an interesting characteristic of the habitus of indigenous peoples; kinship goes far beyond the nuclear family archetype; in indigenous communities children consider their grandparents' siblings as grandparents as well. This is part of the collective dimension of ethnicity that Gutierrez (2008) suggests, and shows the

³⁸ Luzma: Si tus papas hablan Tarasco, ¿tus papás son indígenas? - Ana Rosa: Sí - Luzma: ¿Y tus hermanos? - Ana Rosa: No hablamos lenguas así, pero de todos modos somos por parte de mi mamá. - Luzma: ¿Te gustaría que tus hijos aprendieran tarasco? - Ana Rosa: Pues sí, de las dos lenguas - Luzma: ¿Tus hijos también van a ser indígenas? - Ana Rosa: No sé, creo que sí. - Luzma: ¿Cómo sabes que una persona es indígena? - Ana Rosa: Pues por las costumbres y por los nombres de los pueblos pues, y de hecho de eso nos estaba hablando el otro día el maestro - Luzma: ¿Qué les decía? - Ana Rosa: Pues cómo pueden ser indígenas, por las tierras y todo. Allá tienen montes grandes, son dueños de los montes allá. Mi abuela tenía bien muchos terrenos, ahora ya nomás tiene como tres, dos casas y un campo donde lleva las vacas y una casa donde viven ahí...

intertwining of the dimensions of ethnic identity. Family relations or kinship are one of the main elements in the process of identity formation. These relationships go beyond blood ties; they are also strengthened by relationships of *compadrazgo* (godparenting). indigenous peoples, most of them from the same communities of origin, become *compadres* (godparents) in the city to strengthen the family relationships. Links of *compadrazgo* accompany almost any important family occasion such as baptisms or kindergarten graduations, as Silvia explains:

Silvia: My godfather's name is Chuy, Jesus, and my godmother's name is Rosa.

Luzma: And where are they from, from here?

Silvia: From Sicuicho.

Luzma: Where do they live?

Silvia: Here, because here they also have a house.

Luzma: Yes.

Silvia: And my other godfather is from, from I think [he is] also from Sicuicho.³⁹

Purepecha, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

The process of developing an attachment to the community of origin is a product not only of maintaining the relationships with the grandparents or with the people who 'stayed' there, but also relationships through '*compadrazgos*' (Czarny & Martínez, 2013). Pamela went to visit her parents' community of origin for a week. Her mother had been invited to be godmother to a newborn in her family. This is Pamela's account of her experience:

Pamela: ...they did a party because [my mum] was [going to be] godmother of baptism of a girl, and like they did a very big mass. My mum bought us new clothes here for us to take there, and like they set up many tables, many tables, they put up [tables] and then we ate like, they are, we ate one of those... that are like dough covered by a [corn] leaf and that's what we ate. And we ate sheep meat, I don't remember of what, but of an animal, and they took off the skin and

³⁹ Silvia: Mi padrino se llama Chuy, Jesús y mi madrina se llama Rosa - Luzma: ¿Y de dónde son, de aquí? - Silvia: De Zicuicho - Luzma: ¿En dónde viven? - Silvia: Aquí, porque aquí tienen también tienen aquí su casa - Luzma: Ajá - Silvia: Y otro padrino mío es de este, es de, de también de creo de Zicuicho.

there it was hanging and the horns too, and like they were just next to our house, well, my grandma's [house]...⁴⁰

**'All the family is from Veracruz, [my children would] have to be [Indigenous] too':
Maritza**

Maritza is a Totonaca girl in 6th grade and cousin of Marcos and Miguel Angel. She also visits the community of her parents often and she says that she would like to live there because it is more beautiful than living in the city. She says that she understands a few words in Totonaca, although her mum speaks to her in Spanish too because she does not understand very well yet.

Luzma: And are your grandparents indigenous, Maritza?

Maritza: Yes.

Luzma: And your mum?

Maritza: [She is] too.

Luzma: And you?

Maritza: I'd say I am...

Luzma: And your children if you have them?

Maritza: Well, maybe, I say, **because all the family is from Veracruz, they will have to be too.**⁴¹

Totonaco, 6th grade, 11-years-old

⁴⁰ Pamela: [Mis abuelos] a veces cuando así van a fiestas así allá, pues allá se van y se quedan unos tres días... [Las fiestas] las hacen en un templo bien grandote y pues mi mamá hicieron una fiesta porque fue, fue madrina de una niña de bautismo y pues hicieron una misa bien grandota. Mi mamá nos compró ropa nueva aquí para llevárnosla allá y pues allá pusieron muchas mesas, muchas mesas las armaron y comimos, son unas, comimos unas de esas, que, es como masa, envuelta en hoja de que se llaman corundas y de eso comimos y comimos carne de borrego, no me acuerdo de qué, pero de un animal y le quitaron la piel y ahí estaba colgada y los cuernos también y pues ahí estaba al ladito de la casa de nosotros, de mi abuela pues...

⁴¹ Luzma: Cuando vas a Veracruz con tus abuelos, ellos hablan una lengua indígena, ¿verdad? ¿qué hablan? - Maritza: Pues hablan totonaca, y sí, yo les entiendo más o menos. - Luzma: ¿Y tu mami habla? - Maritza: Sí - Luzma: Y cuando te habla a ti, ¿en qué te habla? - Maritza: En Español, hay veces que en Totonaco también. - Luzma: ¿Pero la mayoría de las veces en español? - Maritza: Sí, en Español - Luzma: ¿Y tú en qué le contestas? - Maritza: En Español... como casi no sé Totonaco. [...] Luzma: ¿Te gustaría que tus hijos aprendieran Totonaco? - Maritza: Pues sí - Luzma: ¿Entonces tus abuelos son indígenas Maritza? - Maritza: Ajá - Luzma: ¿Y tu mamá? - Maritza: También. - Luzma: ¿Y tú? - Maritza: Pues sí, yo digo... - Luzma: ¿Y tus hijos cuando los tengas? - Maritza: Pues, tal vez, digo como la familia es de Veracruz también ellos tienen que ser - Luzma: ¿En dónde te gustaría vivir cuando seas grande? - Maritza: Pues no sé... allá con mis tíos, como casi todos viven allá... siempre vamos en vacaciones - Luzma: ¿En qué trabajan allá tus tíos? - Maritza: Pues como casi todos tienen así tiendas y verdulería, y como allá no hacen tortillas, solo venden masa o maíz para que ellos lo torteen.

Maritza's identity is reinforced by her frequent visits to the community of origin of her mother. In the initial group activity, where children were asked to define how they are and how they are not, she described herself in opposition to being *mestiza*. In my first individual interview with her, I asked what she meant by not being *mestiza*, to which she explained:

Maritza: Well, I remember the teacher saying that *mestizos* are the ones with green eyes, that's what [the teacher] said, and [*mestizos* have] yellow hair I think...⁴²

Totonaco, 6th grade, 11-years-old

It is not clear whether or not Maritza's definition of *mestizo* was inaccurately explained by her teacher, but it is certain that Maritza used the term in opposition to her own representation and that she associated the term with attributes of 'whiteness' by describing someone with 'green eyes' and 'yellow hair'. As Whitten (1981) argues, *mestizaje* is an ideology with 'a tacit qualifying clause which ups the price of admission [to the mixed nation] from mere 'phenotypical mixture' to cultural *blanqueamiento* ('whitening', in terms of becoming more urban, more Christian, more civilised; less rural, less black, less Indian)' (Whitten, 1981:15).

Within this process of '*blanqueamiento*', the case of Maritza offers interesting insights. The day that she and her classmates were completing the research task to describe themselves, I noticed that Maritza and other two non-indigenous girls were discussing the colour of their eyes and skin. One of the non-indigenous girls said that she considered Maritza's eyes to be chocolate-colour. Maritza in her drawing described her skin colour as 'coffee with milk' and her eyes 'honey-colour', lightening up the degree of brownness ascribed to her by her friends; she was whitening herself. Maritza represented herself in opposition to the norm of the *mestizo* majority. Similar to what Skeggs (1997) argues in terms of class identities, there is a process of 'dis-identification' where there is a constant search for socially acceptable and respectable identities.

⁴² Maritza: Pues es que me acuerdo que el maestro dijo que los mestisos son, este los que tienen ojos verdes, por eso así dijo y pelo amarillo creo...

5.3 Attachment to the communities of origin

For some children, the places of origin of their parents are a more important marker of ethnicity than their mother tongues. Nine out of the 22 indigenous children (41%) considered that an indigenous person is defined, not only by their language, but also by the place of origin and their cultural traditions.

Territory, both geographical and symbolic, and attachment to the communal land were salient characteristics in the children's narratives. Cooperation as a strategy for surviving the struggles of the urban life, and the construction of social networks were also important elements that highlighted the identification of indigenous children with their particular cultural indigenous characteristics; cooperation, for instance, is found as a common element of the lifestyle of Mesoamerican indigenous cultures (Paradise, 1987; Paradise & Robles, 2016).

Territory is one of the most important elements of cultural capital and social identity among indigenous peoples. It is a symbol of belonging and loyalty that allows them to set ethnic limits even within non-ethnic contexts, such as cities (Czarny, 2006; Oehmichen, 2005:30). In the children's narratives, the communities of origin of their families appear as a defining element of the children's ethnic identities. Of the 22 indigenous children in the sample, 12 (54.5%) visit their parents' communities of origin on almost every summer vacation.

Table 5.1 Frequency of children's visits to their communities of origin

Children who visit regularly	
Boys	Girls
1. Diego (Purepecha)	1. Acumaryn (Purepecha)
2. Juan Carlos (Purepecha)	2. Pamela (Purepecha)
3. Arturo (Purepecha)	3. Ana Rosa (Purepecha)
4. Luis Miguel (Totonaco)	4. Ariagna (Mazahua)
5. Luis (Nahuatl)	5. Monica (Purepecha)
6. Marcos (Totonaco)	6. Maritza (Totonaco)
Children who visit on special occasions	
Boys	Girls
1. Andres (Nahuatl)	1. Lilia (Nahuatl)
	2. Andrea (Nahuatl)
	3. Alondra (Purepecha)
	4. Sofia (Nahuatl)
	5. Silvia (Purepecha)
Children who rarely visit or who have never gone	
Boys	Girls
1. Hugo (Purepecha)	

2. Manuel (Purepecha)	
3. Juan (Purepecha)	
4. Daniel (Purepecha)	

Children who regularly visited the communities of origin of their parents seemed to have a stronger sense of attachment and belonging to the communal land. During the interviews it was possible to see a pattern of shared characteristics:

- a. Children had a regular participation in the daily activities of the communities, especially in agriculture.
- b. Children narrated a variety of stories and anecdotes about their time in the communities such as helping their family members with daily duties.
- c. Children expressed a desire to visit again.
- d. Children recognised and sometimes appreciated the use of an indigenous language.
- e. Children had family members living in the communities and a family home.
- f. Children had a vast knowledge about the cultural traditions and ways of living of the communities.

Indigenous children who develop a strong and positive attachment to their communities of origin also expressed a number of positive and fun experiences during their times there. Among the difficulties that indigenous children expressed when visiting the communities were:

- a. Children enjoyed visiting the communities but had a conflicting feeling when using the indigenous language or wearing traditional clothing in the cities.
- b. Children enjoyed playing with other children in the communities, but stated that they do not know a lot of people there.
- c. Children expressed frustration at not being able to communicate effectively with other children in the indigenous language.
- d. Children expressed their desire to live in the communities but recognised that the life there was more difficult in terms of economic and labour opportunities.

Part of the attachment to their communities of origin is having several family members still living there. There are some entire families who migrated and who do not own a piece of land that attaches them to that territory physically, especially Purepecha families. I found four characteristics among the children who rarely visit or who have not gone to the communities of origin of their parents:

- a. Their grandparents had died or have also migrated to the cities.
- b. They did not know anybody in the communities.
- c. They believed that only 'old' people live in the communities.
- d. There was no longer a family house in the communities.

The fact that there are indigenous children who do not develop a desire to go to the communities of origin might be explained by the fact that they no longer have family living there; their grandparents, who represent the strongest link for which their parents visit the communities, are very old or have died and they no longer know other people or even family members over there, as will be seen in the case of Hugo, a Purepecha boy.

'I no longer know anybody over there': Hugo

Hugo had been to his grandparents' house only once, and said that he did not want to live in Michoacan because he did not know anybody there; his mother's grandparents were very old and he considered that there would be nobody there when he grew up; in addition, the land that his family used to own had been sold.

Luzma: Would you like to live there, in Patzcuaro, for instance?

Hugo: Well... mmm.... No because I no longer know anybody over there... so no... [...] and since my mum's grandparents are very old and by the time I grow up, **there will be nobody there** because the houses that my mum used to have were destroyed and the one of my dad was sold...

Luzma: And what about the land?

Hugo: Well, they sold the land to other men because my grandma's house is down the hill of the one of my mum's grandparents and also that land is already sold. One day my aunt went to Patzcuaro, Michoacan and saw my dad's grandfather's house, but like, yes, with fruit [trees], but they were not his anymore, they were [property] of a lady, and the lady arrived over there...

Luzma: So you wouldn't like living there?

Hugo: No, I wouldn't find anybody there...(he laughs)

Luzma: Do you like Guadalajara to live?

Hugo: Yes.⁴³

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

‘There are almost no jobs over there’: Diego

There is also an economic dimension in the perception some children have regarding the life in the communities of origin. Even though the indigenous children who visited and enjoyed their time in their parent’s communities of origin developed a stronger attachment than those who did not, they also had conflicting feelings regarding life in the communities:

Diego: **There are almost no jobs over there.**

Luzma: What do people do?

Diego: They go to help [other people] in their houses, when the men are building [others help them] and they get paid that way...

[...]

Luzma: Where would you be happier?

Diego: Over there.

Luzma: Why?

Diego: Because **I like the lake and how they go fishing...**

[...]

Luzma: Do you think life here has been more difficult for your parents, or would it have been more difficult over there...?

Diego: **More difficult over there...**⁴⁴

Diego, 4th grade, 10-year-old

⁴³ Luzma: ¿No te gustaría irte a vivir por ejemplo a Pátzcuaro? – Hugo: No, porque como mis abuelitos de mi mamá están muy viejitos y cuando yo esté grande allá ya casi no va a haber nadie porque las casas que tenía mi mamá ya las derrumbaron y la de mi papá ya las vendieron... – Luzma: ¿Y los terrenos? – Hugo: Pues, los vendieron a otros señores porque una casa de mi abuela está debajo de la de los abuelos de mi mamá y también ese terreno ya está vendido, nomás un día mi tía fue a Pátzcuaro Michoacán y vio la casa de mi abuelo de mi papá, pero cómo se llama, sí con fruta, pero que ya no era de él, eran de una señora, la señora llegó ya allí... – Luzma: ¿Entonces no te gustaría regresar? – Hugo: No, ya no encuentro a nadie (se ríe)... Luzma: ¿Te gusta a ti Guadalajara para vivir? – Hugo: Sí.

⁴⁴ Diego: Allá casi no hay trabajo – Luzma: ¿Qué hace la gente entonces? – Diego: Pues así van a ayudar a las casas, cuando construyen los señores y ya trabajan y ahí mismo les pagan. [...] Luzma: ¿En dónde estarías más contento? – Diego: Allá – Luzma: ¿Por qué? – Diego: Porque allá me gusta el lago y cómo pescan... [...] Luzma: ¿Tú crees que ha sido difícil la vida para tus papás aquí o hubiera sido más difícil allá? – Diego: Más difícil allá...

Diego's experience shows the structural dimension of the ethnic formation (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008). He notices the economic differences between the cities and the countryside, the lack of labour opportunities, but also the collective habitus of solidarity and community work. This awareness of the differences between the lifestyle between two different places goes along with the often-contradictory family messages regarding the language use and its value. Even though he considered that life was harder in Michoacan, he wanted to go back and live there, although this desire was not a real aspiration because the structural possibilities were so much reduced. His mum said that there was no money to go, but Diego said that if he went he could stay with his grandparents and go to school there. He thought life there was much more fun. The fact that grandparents still live in the communities of origin gives immigrant children a sense of security and a strong attachment.

'I feel as I were a stranger': Andres

Andres is an 11-year-old boy in 6th grade. Both his parents are Nahuatl speakers from Hidalgo, but he says that he does not understand or speak any of the language. Andres says that he has visited Hidalgo once to visit his grandparents; and when he went back after his granddad died, almost everybody had left; most of his uncles and cousins had moved to Monterrey. Andres reported having a feeling of being a stranger when he visited Hidalgo:

Andres: [When I go to the ranch] I don't talk to my cousins [who speak Nahuatl], I don't know, it's like **I feel as if I were a stranger** because I don't know them...⁴⁵

Nahuatl, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Feelings of uneasiness and isolation are sometimes part of the dispositions that characterizes the emotional habitus regarding the children's communities of origin. As Cottingham argues, '[u]sing emotional capital to understand the emotional resources that individuals hold and how they activate and experience emotion in practice can shed light on the embodied and non-conscious aspects of emotion within social hierarchies of power and distinction' (Cottingham, 2016, p. 453). These feelings of isolation debilitate

⁴⁵ Andres: [Cuando voy al pueblo] no les hablo a mis primos [que hablan Nahuatl], sabe como que me siento como si fuera un desconocido porque no los conozco...

the emotional resources of indigenous children in a way that they seem unable to translate these resources into emotional capitals that could transform their social fields.

‘We will go there to harvest’: Monica

Many Purepecha children have a subcultural capital that seems to be only mobilised when they go to their communities of origin. It is a subcultural capital because it is a counter-capital that it is not recognized by the mainstream Mexican society. They have a cultural knowledge that it is rarely mobilised within the cities. Monica is an example:

Monica: When we are on vacations, **we will go there to harvest**. And then we won’t come until school starts again and then when we are [on vacations] we go again. We go in all vacations [...] when we don’t go, my mum or my dad calls [my granddad] and tell him that we’re not coming, because sometimes we are left with no money and then we don’t go, and then my granddad gets people together and they harvest.⁴⁶

Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old

In addition to the agricultural knowledge, they also live within a habitus of mutual help and cooperation, a characteristic of many indigenous communities, while in the cities, there is a dominant individualistic approach.

‘[I have gone to Veracruz] like twenty times, we go on vacations’: Marcos

Marcos and his brother were the two children in the sample who visited their communities of origin most frequently, and who elaborated their experiences with most detail. Oral tradition and the knowledge of local histories is one of the main characteristics of the Totonaco habitus (Comboni & Lucas, 2012). They were also two of the children in the study with a stronger attachment to the communities of origin of their parents. Luis Miguel shared many stories of his experiences in Veracruz in great detail, as shown in the following extract:

⁴⁶ Monica: Cuando salga de vacaciones nos vamos a ir allá a cosechar. Y luego ya no venimos hasta que entremos otra vez a la escuela y luego ya cuando salgamos otra vez nos vamos, todas las vacaciones nos vamos cuando salimos... [...] es que cuando no vamos, mi mamá o mi papá le habla [a mi abuelito] y le dice que no vamos, porque en veces nos quedamos sin dinero y ya no nos vamos y ya mi abuelito junta gente allá y ya ellos cosechan.

Luis Miguel: [My granddad has a mill] to make *tortillas*, because tortillas are handmade, and that's all. Imagine, they grind the dough and now, it's time to press it between your hands and they heat the brazier.⁴⁷

Luis Miguel: Well, I saw how the *piloncillo*⁴⁸ is made, how it is known here, there it's known as *panela*. They make it, they have moulds and they put it in them. It is cane, that they squeeze with all its skin and everything and it gets like brown colour and then, they put it to boil in a big pan, yes, and then the *panela* is done... they hire a horse, they hold it so he goes around to squeeze all the canes that they harvested and then they put it into moulds and boil them. And that's how the *panela* is done over there and there are sesame seeds that are eaten by armadillos. My brother has an armadillo shell, do you know them? those that make themselves like a little ball?⁴⁹

And he continues:

Luis Miguel: And they go out to get bees, they make a house and then they bring smoke to scare them and [the bees get into the house] and they make honey, have you try it? Over there, my grandma, we eat the little bugs of the wasp... there are also little wasps and my uncle gets the sting out and we play with it, and sometimes we heat it on the *comal*⁵⁰ and they eat them grilled⁵¹

Totonaca, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

⁴⁷ Luis Miguel: [Mi abuelo tiene un molino] de tortillas, porque las tortillas las hacen a mano, y ya. Haz de cuenta, muelen la masa y ya pues hora, pues hora tortean para hacer tortillas y calientan el brasero.

⁴⁸ Mexican brown sugar

⁴⁹ Luis Miguel: Y pues vi cuando hacen el piloncillo, como aquí lo conocen, allá lo conocen como panela. Hacen, tienen moldes y ahí los echan. Es caña que las exprimen y queda con todo y cáscara y queda como color café y hora lo echan y lo cocen en una cazuela grande, sí y pues ya se hace la panela... contratan a un caballo para que dé, lo agarran y lo amarran para que le dé vuelta y pues hora lo hacen exprimir todas las cañas que cosecharon y pues hora lo echan en moldes y lo cocen. Y así se hace la panela allá y allá hay ajonjolí que se lo comen armadillos. Mi hermano tiene una cáscara de armadillo, ¿sí los conoce a los que se hacen bolita?

⁵⁰ Metal hotplate for cooking tortillas

⁵¹ Luis Miguel: Y van por abejas, agarran, hacen una casa y luego las echan, llevan brasa para espantarlas y se meten ahí y pues hora se hace la miel, ¿sí la ha llegado a probar? Allá mi abuelita, nos comemos allá los bichitos de la avispa... y también hay avispas chiquitas y mi tío les quita el aguijón y pues lo jugamos y a veces los calienta en el comal y ahí las comen asaditas...

Marcos and Luis Miguel have a strong cultural capital and they seem to feel comfortable with the community habitus of their communities of origin:

Luis Miguel: **We don't need matches but two stones, we beat them [against each other] like twice and they get sparks, the stone by itself gets on fire and like throws out... there, what they have is animals, my granddad has pigs and I got up at 3 in the morning to see how they kill them...**⁵²

Totonaca, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

Luis Miguel: Well, there, many [people] use braids, like my grandma doesn't use elastic bands [for the hair], they just braid it and the hair stays there, braided. And like there they don't use the stove, there, they make bricks and like now, they make tortillas. One day my mum was making [tortillas], and her hair got on fire, she had it very long and it got on fire, and her mum put it out. And my uncle, the one who makes jewels, he cut out his little toe, because **before they were barefoot, barefoot, and now he uses like sandals...**⁵³

Totonaca, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

From their experiences, it is possible to see that ethnic identification embraces aspects of ethnicity that go beyond considering oneself as 'indigenous'. They might not explicitly recognise themselves as indigenous, but they are embedded within the Totonaca habitus. Ethnic identity is complex and problematic: they want to avoid a pathologised identity, but at the same time they are part of a family; they identify proudly with their family and the community culture. However, in a different field such as the Mexican school, they report feelings of shame. They are constantly dis-identifying with their ethnic identity (Skeggs, 1997, 2004), as shown in the following extract where even though they do not speak about their own experience, they refer to other indigenous children's feelings.

⁵² Luis Miguel: No ocupamos nosotros cerillos sino que dos piedras, les pegamos como dos veces y saca chispas la piedra y pues sola se prende y hora pues, pues echa chispas... y allá lo que tienen de animales, mi abuelito tiene puercos y yo me levanté a las 3 de la mañana para ver cómo los mataban...

⁵³ Luis Miguel: Y pues allá, muchos se peinan con trenzas, como mi abuelita no ocupa donas, nomás se lo trenza y así le queda el cabello trenzado. Y pues allá no ocupan como la estufa, allá es, hacen de ladrillos y pues hora lo, pues allá hacen las tortillas. Que un día mi mamá que andaba haciendo así, que se le prendió el cabello, que lo tenía bien largo, y se le prendió y hora que se lo apagó su mamá y que hora a mi tío el que hace joyas, que se le cortó el dedo chiquito del pié, porque andaba con, antes caminaban descalzos, descalzos y ahorita ya tienen como huaraches...

Luis Miguel: **[I have gone to Veracruz] like twenty times, we go on vacations** [...] because when we went last year, we were going to go to Tajin and to a lot of places, but my granddad needed [money] for his mill and we gave [money to] him, my mum gave him money...⁵⁴
[...]

Luzma: Why do you think that there are some children who feel ashamed of saying [that their parents are indigenous]?

Luis Miguel: Well, I don't know, **I think that because they feel ashamed that their parents were indigenous and that's why they don't want to say it.**

Luzma: And why does that happen?

Luis Miguel: Well, **I don't know why it would be a shame being indigenous, because I could also be one of those, but since I was born here, I don't know...**⁵⁵

Totonaca, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

As shown in these two cases, family and community habitus have both conscious and unconscious modes. It is not only what you say about your own identity, but also the experiences (individual and historical) that give you the sense of who you are and what you want to become. Luis Miguel's and Marcos's accounts were so vivid and enthusiastic, and they regularly asked me if I knew what they were talking about; they seemed to be conscious of the richness and uniqueness of the experiences they were sharing. Visits to the communities of origin represent opportunities for children to learn the customs and traditions of their families, as also to cooperate for the common good of the family.

Aspirations for social mobility through education were very clear in this family. Luis Miguel and Marcos' parents placed a great importance on achievement at school to have

⁵⁴ Luis Miguel: [He ido a Veracruz] como veinte veces, en vacaciones vamos [...] porque cuando fuimos el otro año, íbamos a ir a Tajin y a muchas partes, pero mi abuelito ocupaba para su molino y pues ahora le dimos, le dio mi mamá dinero...

⁵⁵ Luzma: ¿Por qué crees tú que hay niños que les da pena decir [que sus papás son indígenas?]- Luis Miguel: Pues no sé, pues yo creo que, pues porque tienen vergüenza que sus papás este, fueron indígenas y pues por eso no quieren decir - Luzma: ¿Y por qué pasa eso? - Luis Miguel: Pues yo no sé qué sería de vergüenza ser indígena, pues yo también podría ser uno de esos, pero como yo nací aquí no sé...

access to a good job. As will be shown in the following chapter, these two children were among the best achieving pupils in the school.

Luis Miguel: ... my mum finished secondary and high school [here in Guadalajara], [...] **She says that if she had [studied] university, she wouldn't be working in a house.**⁵⁶

Totonaco, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

'My mother doesn't like to go because we don't have [a place] to stay...': Lilia

Lilia was an 11-year-old girl in sixth grade whose mother was from Huejutla, Hidalgo and was a Nahuatl speaker. She offered interesting insights into how the experiences of discrimination of the parents are transmitted to children and influence their processes of identity formation.

Lilia: ... my mum arrived [to the city] and then my aunt, the youngest and the other brothers stayed there [in the ranch], but everyone followed his own path because they are older [...] my aunt Alice says that it was very difficult for her because there was a time in which she did not know to speak Spanish, **she worked but did not get paid...** [she used to work] with some family [and they did not pay her] **because she did not know how to speak Spanish** and she did not even understand them... and then I think that my mum learnt with the help of a dictionary and so... [my mum learnt] because she had a friend called Patty and when [my mum] wanted a soda, [Patty] would order the soda for her, but then this friend left and my mum had to learn by herself and with the help of a dictionary and with my aunts...⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Luis Miguel: ...dicen que mi mama, que aquí terminó la prepa, la secundaria... porque la preparatoria, pus como no podía viajar... por eso no la pudo terminar, la comenzó la preparatoria y pus así. Dice que si ella tuviera universidad no estuviera trabajando en casa y pues así.

⁵⁷ Lilia: ...mi mamá llegó y mi tía la más chiquita y ya, y allá se quedaron otros hermanos, pero ya cada quien agarró su propio rumbo porque ellos eran más grandes [...] mi tía Alicia dice que se le hizo más difícil porque como hubo un tiempo que no sabía español, trabajaba y no le pagaban... [trabajaba] con unos señores [y no le pagaban] porque ella no sabía hablar español, ni les entendía... ya luego creo que con un diccionario mi mamá se ayudó y ya con eso ya... [mi mamá aprendió] porque tenía una amiga que se llamaba Paty y cuando ella quería un refresco, ella le pedía, y ya la amiga de ella ya le pedía y le compraba el refresco y así, pero luego se fue esa amiga y mi mamá tuvo que aprender sola y con la ayuda de un diccionario y con mis tías...

Lilia had been to Huejutla only once, but she did not like to go because she said that her uncle got angry very easily. Her grandparents no longer lived in the community of origin, as the following quotes show:

Lilia: ... my mother doesn't like to go because we don't have [a place] to stay, nobody wants us there... my grandparents died...⁵⁸

Nahuatl girl, 6th grade, 11-year-old

There seems to be a weak connection to the community of origin after grandparents have died; Lilia did not feel welcomed in the community anymore and felt that nobody wanted them there. This situation, similar to other realities of immigrant communities around the world, represents possibilities of new configurations of symbolic communities within multicultural environments that transcend the idea of geographic territories.

'They [put on my birth certificate] that I am from there, but I was born here': Ariagna

Ariagna, like many other indigenous children, lived a contradictory process of identity formation. The place where she was born, Atlacomulco, seemed to be an important factor in constructing her ethnic identity. Her narrative highlights the importance that most indigenous migrants place on taking their new-born children to their communities of origin to get their birth certificates. Even though their babies were born in the city, most families prefer to have a birth certificate from their community of origin. In order to get the birth certificate from their communities of origin, some indigenous immigrants wait for several months or even years until they have enough savings to make the trip.

The notion of territory highlights the importance of a collective identity, not only in terms of geographical and physical space, but as a set of meaningful relationships and common symbols that the members of a group share and refer to as a common origin and family history (Oehmichen, 2005:31). Ariagna seemed to relate the place where she was born with her identification as a member of an indigenous group, even though her

⁵⁸ Lilia: ...a mi mamá no me gusta ir porque como no tenemos en dónde quedarnos, porque nadie nos quiere ahí... mis abuelitos ya se murieron...

birth certificate said that she was born in Atlacomulco. It is interesting to see that the decision that some families make to get their children's birth certificates in their own communities of origin seems to respond to a parental desire to belong to the place of common origin. The following quote gives us an example:

Luzma: So are your grandparents indigenous Mazahua?

Ariagna: Yes.

Luzma: And is your mother also indigenous?

Ariagna: My mother? More or less, I would think that she is.

Luzma: And you?

Ariagna: I am not.

Luzma: Why not?

Ariagna: **Because I was born here, only my sister named Ester, the oldest one, she was born there, [but] they say [on my birth certificate] that [I was born] there in Atlaco, Atlaco, Atlacomulco, or who knows what the name is. They [put on my birth certificate] that I am from there, but I was born here.**⁵⁹

Mazahua, 4th grade, 10-year-old

Ariagna is dis-identifying herself with his ethnic origin because she was born in the city, however she assigns her family members a sense of belonging to a communal land as she recognizes the importance that her family gives to having her birth certificate issued on Atlacomulco, like the rest of her family.

5.4 Reflexive identification

This category was constructed through the changes in children's perceptions once they had the space to reflect on their own ethnicities within an environment of respect and cultural validation. This analytical category is very helpful in highlighting the power that school agents might have to strengthen or weaken children's ethnic identities. After

⁵⁹ Luzma: ¿Entonces tus abuelitos son indígenas mazahuas?- Ariagna: Sí - Luzma: ¿Y tu mamá también es indígena? - Ariagna: ¿Mi mamá? Más o menos, se me hace que sí - Luzma: ¿Y tú? - Ariagna: Yo no - Luzma: ¿Por qué no? - Ariagna: Porque yo nací aquí, solamente mi hermana que se llama Ester, la más grande ella sí nació de allá, ma que me ponen de allá Atlaco, Atlaco, Atlacomuldo o quién sabe cómo le llaman. También ahí me pusieron, también allá me pusieron el que nací allí pero nací aquí.

several conversations with some of the children, their perceptions regarding the richness of their ethnic identities changed to become stronger and more secure.

‘They feel proud because they are not from that race’: Hugo

Hugo’s case is one of the examples of the reflexive identification that I was able to find within the children’s data. In our first interview, Hugo said that his parents have not talked to him about language or ethnic matters, and even though they both speak Purepecha, he does not self-identify as such. In addition to this, Hugo’s quote suggests that being indigenous is a thing of the past.

Luzma: And are your parents indigenous?

Hugo: Mmm, indigenous, indigenous, indigenous no...

Luzma: No, why not?

Hugo: Because [...] they haven’t talked to us about that and that’s why I say no.

Luzma: So, even though they speak the language, they are not [indigenous]?

Hugo: No, I believe [they are] not

Luzma: Who would you say is an indigenous person?

Hugo: Eh, [someone who] **speaks a different language, that we don’t understand but that [language] comes from many years ago**, but that [he/she] has relatives and they are also indigenous⁶⁰

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

In Hugo’s definition, being indigenous is not only a matter of speaking the language but also the transmission of the historical tradition or indigenous cultural capital what counts. After Hugo listened to his own definition of an indigenous person, he corrected himself and said that maybe his parents were indeed indigenous and he also added the element of traditional clothing. This happened after a process of self-reflection based on listening to voices, in this case, my voice as a researcher, regarding their own cultural experiences. In this way, some children, like Hugo, seem to have positively redefined

⁶⁰ Luzma: ¿Y tus papás son indígenas?- Hugo: Mmm, indígenas, indígenas, indígenas no...- Luzma: ¿No, por qué no?- Hugo: Porque cómo se llama, no nos han platicado de eso y por eso yo digo que no - Luzma: ¿Entonces aunque hablen la lengua no son?- Hugo: Yo creo que no - Luzma: ¿Quién dirías que es una persona indígena?- Hugo: Eh, habla así otro idioma, que nosotros no entendemos pero que viene así de muchos años ya, pero que tiene parientes así y también son indígenas

their own ethnic identity when they were positively reinforced. This shows the fluidity within the construction of ethnic identities.

Hugo: Well I'd say that **maybe my parents are [indeed] part of those**, of the indigenous, and then I would also be if I'd learnt the language [...]

Luzma: So [you are saying] that if someone does not speak the language, he/she is not indigenous anymore?

Hugo: Well yes, the way of dressing, like my grandma does, she wears a blouse with figures like this, like the ones in the photographs we saw about Patzcuaro and all that, and she wears like that and then my other [grandmother] is from here from Guadalajara and that's why **I think that it's because of the way they dress**, the skirts they wear. [When] we go there and also here **we have the tradition of dancing**, like my brother and I dance on 'La 21 de marzo' and my sister wears clothes like that, blouses with figures, the skirt like folded and all, and with ribbons, and coloured laces like in Patzcuaro.⁶¹

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

From Hugo's statements, it is possible to see that he might be experiencing a contradictory sense of his own ethnicity based not only on a generational shift but also on his experiences when he went to the community of origin and was able to compare and contrast the traditions there with those in the city. He used the pronouns 'we' and 'they' to refer to indigenous peoples, showing the similarities and differences embedded in a process of ethnic identity formation.

The pull and tug in Hugo's habitus (Ingram, 2011) is shown by his perception of the school setting as a place where teachers are not interested in knowing about their cultural origins. Hugo said that he felt proud that his parents spoke an indigenous language but he did not share this linguistic capital in his school:

⁶¹ Hugo: Pues yo digo que a lo mejor mis papás sí son parte de esos, de los indígenas y pues yo también si aprendiera esa lengua - Luzma: O sea que si alguien ya no habla la lengua, ¿ya no es indígena?- Hugo: No pues sí, la forma de vestirse, como mi abuela anda así como se pone una camisa así con figuras, como las de las fotografías que vimos de Pátzcuaro y todo eso, y se pone así y luego otra que es de aquí de Guadalajara y por eso pienso que así es por la forma que visten, las faldas que traen y como vamos a veces para allá, aquí tenemos la costumbre de bailar yo y mi hermano para el 12 de marzo y mi hermana como se pone la ropa así, camisas así con figuras, la falda así como doblada y todo y con moños, listones de colores como en Pátzcuaro.

Hugo: No, because like the teachers don't talk about that. It is like **they are only interested in things like we learn about Spanish, science and those things** about life and nature and like the history of the past, but like they don't want to know where we come from, only what our birth certificates say, that's how they know.⁶²

Purepecha, 5th grade, 10-year-old

Hugo's account was very powerful in showing how schools undermine the ethnic identities of indigenous children. Indigenous children have learned through their families and through the teachers' messages that schools are not safe places to share their ethnic distinctiveness. Mexican schools openly and systematically neglect the multicultural condition of their classrooms; the curriculum is focused, as Hugo highlights, on subjects and not on the sociocultural background of their students, thus contributing to the negation of children's ethnic identities and therefore to the homogenisation of their differences. This is also part of the pulling forces of the 'habitus tug' of indigenous children (Ingram, 2011). In our second and third conversations, Hugo was one of the indigenous children who elaborated more about the unequal relationships between *mestizos* and indigenous peoples; he even used the concept of race to describe it:

Luzma: Do you think that non-indigenous people value indigenous people?

Hugo: No, because like they feel very proud about themselves because they aren't Indians, that **they are not from that race** and that they are very different [in] **how they dress, like how they look** or something like that...

Luzma: And what do you think about that?

Hugo: Like they say, we are all equal, from the little children to the oldest, we are equal, everyone, we have the same customs, we are identical, well, not in everything, but we are equal, there is nothing different.⁶³

⁶² Hugo: No, porque así como que los maestros no platican sobre eso. Como que a ellos nomás les interesa así las cosas que aprendemos sobre Español, naturales y esas cosas de la vida, la naturaleza y pues la historia de antes, pero como no quieren así saber de dónde venimos, nomás de lo de nuestras actas de nacimiento, nomás con eso ya saben.

⁶³ Luzma: ¿Tú crees que la gente que no es indígena valora a los indígenas? - Hugo: No, porque como que se creen acá mucho de que no son indios, que no son de esa raza y que son muy distintos cómo se visten, que son fachas o cosas así... - Luzma: ¿Y tú qué opinas de eso? - Hugo: Que como dicen, que

Hugo's account shows the structural dimension of ethnicity (Gutiérrez Martínez, 2008), one that shows inequalities and power dynamics based on visible attributes such as 'looks' and 'dressing'. Hugo, like many other indigenous children in my research, is able to identify the attributes that must be hidden in order to avoid being identified as indigenous: traditional clothing and language as the most visible ones. This is part of the navigational capital that Yosso and Solorzano (2005) suggest allows children to adapt to the mainstream field; however, this process works to the detriment of being able to fully develop and enrich their ethnic identities.

Most children use this strategy of hiding their ethnic identities to avoid being discriminated against, which is also detrimental to their linguistic and cultural strengthening of their own capital. Hugo has learned that the use of an indigenous language at school is a stimulant for bullying, so he prevents this by saying that he is not indigenous because he has been born in the city and he feels that he is both indigenous and non-indigenous, because he does not speak the language very well. However, he recognises his indigenous lineage.

Hugo: ... those who aren't indigenous start saying things [like]: 'no, you go to the place you were born, you are...' they think things like that, like, my mum is indigenous and she says that when she was little she used to work, she went to the mill and all that, and that is why I think, since they were little, since they are 5 years old they start working from 7 in the morning, **I think that is because they have a different way of thinking, [indigenous peoples] think a lot about their families** and all that, but the rest of the people think in making, in making them cry and they feel sad.

Hugo highlighted the collective dimension of his ethnicity and one of the most important characteristics of the collective habitus of indigenous peoples: the importance

todos somos iguales, de a partir de los niños chiquitos hasta los más viejos somos iguales, todos, tenemos las mismas costumbres, somos idénticos, bueno, casi en todo no, pero somos iguales, no hay nada que haya diferente.

of family relationships and hard work. Hugo was able to see a difference between his own habitus and that of the *mestizos* groups, which in his opinion did not have the same sensibility and respect.

'I am too': Monica

The case of Monica shows another conflicting process of identity formation that later turned into a positive self-description. Her account showed a process of self-reflection in her identity formation at the same time that she analysed the structural complexities of her life as an indigenous person. She had a sound knowledge of her Purepechan culture, but she opted to keep this secret at school. At the beginning of the fieldwork, she seemed nervous and uncomfortable when talking about ethnicity and indigenous language. The common answer to a question related to her parents' language was: 'I don't know'. Monica had an aunt from Pama, Michoacán, who recently migrated and lived with her. She spoke Tarasco with her mum and dad but she said that she did not understand very well.

Months later and after several conversations, she felt really easy, open and proud to tell me about the celebrations in her community of origin. She even gave me a videotape of one of the celebration of Santo Santiago in Michoacán, to share with me the beauty of the traditions. In every interview, Monica shared more and more about her family's heritage and it seemed to me that along this process, she was reinforcing her own ethnic identity.

Luzma: So, Monica, are your parents indigenous?

Monica: Well, yes.

Luzma: Yes, and you?

Monica: **Well, [I am] too.**⁶⁴

Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old

I call this process a *reflexive self-definition*, where children feel secure and reinforced to explore their own cultural roots in a reflective interaction with others, within a context where they feel respected and valued. One day, I was in her classroom with her teacher,

⁶⁴ Luzma: Oye Monica ¿y tus papás son indígenas?- Monica: Pues sí - Luzma: Sí, ¿y tú?- Monica: Pues también

and the teacher asked whether someone knew how to speak an indigenous language. Monica did not raise her hand, instead she only looked at me with an unconformable or uneasy look and she kept silent. Later on I asked Monica about this incident and she explained:

Luzma: Do you remember the day I was in your classroom and your teacher asked whose families speak an indigenous language?

Monica: Yes.

Luzma: Why didn't you raise your hand?

Monica: **Because I don't speak very well, and like the teacher said that there were like three or four in the classroom and I didn't raise my hand.**

Luzma: And the first time your teacher asked, did you raise your hand?

Monica: No, because **I didn't know the name of the language, that's why.**⁶⁵

Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old

Monica assumed that there were other children who were indigenous speakers in her classroom and she did not want to be the same as them. She felt she was not proficient enough in Purepecha to be considered indigenous. However, she did not mention her family's language either. Monica might also have anticipated a discriminatory reaction of her classmates during the following days and months, and the benefits of sharing the language of her family would not bring her much benefit after all. According to the field children are in, it seems to be a mix of insecurity about their ethnic identity for not being language proficient, and at the same time a certain fear of opening up the cultural differences they internally value.

'I want you to be more than us': Marcos

Comboni and Lucas (2012) also found that territory is one of the main categories in the formation of the ethnic identity of indigenous children. The physical space is a symbol of socio-territorial belonging, but it is also assessed in terms of the cultural capital of

⁶⁵ Luzma: ¿Te acuerdas del día que fui a tu salón y la maestra les preguntó que quienes de su familia hablaban lengua indígena? - Mónica: Sí - Luzma: ¿Por qué no levantaste tu mano? - Mónica: Ah, porque casi no hablo bien, bien, como ya estaban... dijo la maestra que eran tres o cuatro en el salón y por eso no la levanté - Luzma: ¿La primera vez que les preguntó levantaste tu mano? - Mónica: No, porque yo no sabía cuál lengua era, por eso.

each individual. The positive or negative associations made to the territory, or in Bourdieu terms, the symbolic value (Bourdieu, 1999), is associated with the power relationships in the economic and social fields, in both the present and the past (Giménez, 1999). The reasons for migrating are not just economic – there are also cultural issues, especially for women, that make them decide to look for broader opportunities outside the cultural and social expectations of the community of origin, as in the case of Gabriela. Comboni and Lucas (2012) conducted a study in Zozocolco de Hidalgo, Veracruz in a tele-secondary with Totonaca children. They found that within the Totonaca culture: ‘activities understood as cultural practice, ethnicity, local histories, gender and religion’ were fundamental pieces in cultural and identity formation (ibid, p.274). Gender inequalities and discrimination are especially accentuated in women who were born in rural communities away from the municipality (‘the centre’). Marcos explains the reason for his parents’ migration as follows:

Marcos: ...they say it is almost the same [here and there], but **there it’s harder to earn the money than it is here**. And there like... they wanted to have more, learn more too. And there like, women, like my mum, were hardly able to finish primary because her mum and her dad didn’t allow her to finish because... like... there **they only have to learn to cook and to mend the clothes** and like... they work at home and the men grow corn and everything... it’s what they do there and they decided, my mum rather [came here] because she was going to start secondary school but she couldn’t there and then she came here with her uncle instead.⁶⁶

Totonaco, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Based on the parent’s experience, there is a strong message for children to keep on studying and reach higher levels of schooling and try to achieve a university degree in order to have different conditions of living from the ones their parents had back in their communities of origin, as Marcos explains:

⁶⁶ Marcos: ... es que dicen que es casi lo mismo, pero allá es más duro ganarse el dinero que aquí. Y allá pues... querían tener más, aprender más también. Y allá pues, las mujeres con esfuerzo mi mamá pudo terminar la primaria porque su mamá y su papá no la dejaban terminar porque... este... allá nomás se tienen que enseñar a hacer de comer y a remendar la ropa y ya este... y se dedican a la casa y los hombres a cultivar el maíz y todo... allá es lo que hacen y se decidieron mejor mi mamá porque allá iba a entrar a la secundaria pero no pudo porque allá no pudo ya, y ya mejor se vino con su tío.

Marcos: when she was little, **my mum was like the indigenous and they didn't allow her to study** and she finished primary school, finished primary and she came here, she came with a grandma because there you see how they have to make *nixtamal*⁶⁷ and all that...⁶⁸

In Marcos' account, it is possible to see the contradictory value of the indigenous background, as if the conditions of urban living were better than when his mum was living in her community and she was 'like the indigenous'. Like Marcos, many other indigenous children's narratives in the study gave accounts of the struggles their parents had faced to continue studying because of the poverty and lack of opportunities in their communities of origin.

However, indigenous people's aspirations to improve their living conditions when migrating to the cities are shattered as a product of the symbolic violence of the system; where more than 80 per cent of indigenous peoples in the country are still living in conditions of poverty (CONEVAL, 2012). If it is difficult for indigenous children to finish secondary school, then the possibilities for them to finish a university career are minimal. Nonetheless, the family message is still strong: to take advantage of the opportunities they did not have back in their communities of origin:

Marcos: Yes, they say that **they don't want me to be like them**, that they only studied until secondary school, so they want me to have a career [...] **I don't want you to be like us**, who didn't learn much and **I want you to be more than us**.⁶⁹

Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Marcos's parents do not want their children to be like them, as a judgment based on the educational opportunities they were not able to have. As Bourdieu points out "the transmission of inheritance depends on the judgements made by the school system; they

⁶⁷ Nixtamal is the preparation of corn (maize) by hulling, soaking and cooking.

⁶⁸ Marcos: es que cuando era chiquita mi mamá eran como los indígenas y pues no la dejaban casi estudiar y terminó la primaria, terminó la primaria y se vino aquí, se vino con una abuelita porque allá, ya ve que tienen que hacer el nixtamal y eso y ya...

⁶⁹ Marcos: Sí me dicen que no quieren que sea como ellos, que nada más estudiaron hasta la secundaria, que quieren que haga mi carrera [...] no quiero que seas como nosotros que no aprendimos mucho, y quiero que seas más que nosotros.

act as a brutal and powerful reality principle which, by intensifying competition, is responsible for many failures and disappointments” (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 507). In Marcos’s case it is not the competition that is the source of a disappointment but the lack of educational opportunities that his parents faced. As Bourdieu argues these experiences contribute to the construction of a identity where schools very often are at the “core of suffering of the interviewees, who have been disappointed either in their own plans or in their plans for their children or by the ways the job market has reneged on the promises and guarantees made by the educational system” (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 507). There is a clear message of leaving behind part of their past, sacrificing part of the parent’s histories, maybe ‘asking the impossible’ of children.

During the collective research task where the children were shown different photographs of children around the world, some indigenous children made reference to the differences in clothing and language and said that some of those children, especially those from Mexico, probably had different traditions as well. When I conducted this activity with the 6th grade students, I asked whether some of them were indigenous. All of the children remained silent. I asked whether they knew somebody who was indigenous and Marcos said that his grandfather was indigenous. However, he did not seem comfortable sharing with the group any more details about the ethnicity of his grandfather, who speaks Totonaco and lives in Veracruz. In the group discussion, I asked Marcos whether he considered himself indigenous, since his grandfather was. He nervously laughed and chose not to answer the question by saying: ‘Who knows?’

Luzma: So, your grandparents, only your grandparents are indigenous?

Marcos: And my parents too...

Luzma: And, are you indigenous?

Marcos: Who knows...? (He and the rest of the children laughed)⁷⁰

Totonaco, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Like Marcos, other children seemed uncomfortable discussing these topics in front of their classmates. Influenced by their families or by their own or others’ experiences,

⁷⁰ Luzma: ¿Entonces tus abuelos nada más tus abuelos son indígenas?- Marcos: Y mis papás también- Luzma: ¿Y tú eres indígena?- Marcos: Sabe... (se ríe y los demás niños también)

indigenous children seemed to decide that it was better not to discuss their ethnicity in the school in order to avoid conflict and stereotyping.

‘If I’d learnt Totonaco like my parents, I would also teach it to my children’: Marcos

Later on, in an individual interview after some months of fieldwork, Marcos reflected a little more on his ethnic identity and said:

Luzma: Do your parents consider themselves indigenous?

Marcos: Yes.

Luzma: And you?

Marcos: I’d say yes because my parents are indigenous.

Luzma: And your children?

Marcos: I won’t know very well, because if I marry an indigenous [woman] then yes, they will be indigenous, but if [she] is from here from Guadalajara, then not quite. And **if I’d learnt Totonaco like my parents**, I would also teach it to my children. **It would be like a legacy that my mother leaves me.**⁷¹

Marcos, 6th grade, Totonaco boy

Marcos’ quote illustrates another important element of ethnicity which is the *legacy* of the parents. *Legacy* and *tradition* are crucial elements in the formation of ethnic identity of indigenous children even within the contradictions of their own ethnic identity formation based on their parents’ messages (Bourdieu, 1999). Marcos recognises that learning Totonaco and passing it on to his children is continuing his mother’s legacy. However, Marcos is only expressing this idea as speculation and not as a real possibility. At the end, learning an indigenous language is not part of the dominant cultural capital that is valued in the cities and he might be aware of the difficulties implied in wanting to learn Totonaco and bequeath it to his children. In addition to this, the diversity of opportunities that the city brings in terms of forming an ethnically mixed family represents for Marcos the possibility to marry a non-indigenous woman;

⁷¹ Luzma: ¿Y tus papas se consideran indígenas?- Marcos: Sí - Luzma: ¿Y tú?- Marcos: Yo digo que sí pues mis papás son indígenas - Luzma: ¿Y tus hijos?- Marcos: No voy a saber muy bien, porque si me caso con una indígena pues sí van a ser indígenas, pero si es de aquí de Guadalajara, ya casi no. Y si aprendiera el totonaco así como mis papás, les enseñaría también a mis hijos. Sería como una herencia que me dejaría mi madre.

however, the legacy of his family seems to be strong enough to maintain his own ethnic identity.

Legacy is also related to the attachment to their communities of origin. Marcos and Luis Miguel had inherited a piece of land in their community of origin. Having a piece of land in the community gives children a feeling of collective duty, a visit that seems to have a meaning beyond spending the holidays and seeing the family. Marcos explained:

Marcos: [...] my granddad grows corn and he sells, he sells bananas and pineapples, he grows pineapple and banana and that's why [...] they don't live in the house they used to live anymore, they bought another land and now my mum bought land and my mum says that she will give it to me as my **inheritance**, she says, there is banana and avocado already...

Luzma: Do you know how to harvest?

Marcos: More or less. When I go to clean the corn, when I was little I went and I didn't know very well because I used to take down everything, even the [plant], you see how [the corn] is small, I took everything down, and they told me: no, those [plants] grow with sorrow and effort because you see how we grow a whole field and half of it is eaten by the birds and rats, they said, and that's what they do...

Luzma: Would you like to be in charge of that land that your mum bequeathed you?

Marcos: Yes... **to stay there for a while, to know how their traditions are and what they do over there, what they eat and what they do...**⁷²

Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old

⁷² Marcos: ...mi abuelito como siembra maíz y vende, vende plátano y piña, cultiva piña también y plátano y ya por eso, [...] ya no viven en la casa donde vivían antes, ya compraron otro terreno y ya pues mi mamá compró un terreno y ya y me dice mi mamá que ese me va a dejar de herencia dice, ya allá hay plátano, aguacate... - Luzma: ¿Tú sabes cultivar? - Marcos: Más o menos. Cuando voy a limpiar el maíz, cuando estaba más chiquito iba y no le sabía muy bien porque tumbaba junto con la milpa, ya ve que está chiquita, lo tumbaba todo y me decían no esas con la pena y el esfuerzo crecen porque ya ves que sembramos todo un cultivo y la mitad se lo comen los pájaros y las ratas dice, y es lo que hacen ellos... Luzma: ¿Te gustaría hacerte cargo del terreno cuando tu mamá te lo herede? - Marcos: Sí... estar allá un buen tiempo, para saber cómo son sus costumbres y qué hacen allá, cómo comen allá y qué hacen...

There is a learning process that children are aware of if they want to adapt to the life of the communities of their parents. Marcos refers to a community habitus that he needs to learn.

**'I rather don't say anything, because I see what it looks like and one must feel bad':
Marcos**

Marcos, like many other indigenous children in this study, encounters a climate of hostility within the field of the school if they share their ethnic origins:

Luzma: Have you noticed any difference in how people treat indigenous speakers?

Marcos: No, because **I hardly ever tell my classmates because they make fun of you**, they say I don't know what and they start telling you things, I better don't say anything...

Luzma: You have never told them?

Marcos: More or less, I only tell them that they live in Veracruz and speak Totonaco.

Luzma: Did you decide that or your parents recommended it?

Marcos: **No, I decided it, because they made fun of a classmate** and that's why I don't want them to make fun of me and that's why I haven't told them.

Luzma: What type of mockery did they do?

Marcos: They say that your parents I don't know what and they start speaking, you see how in the tele they [speak] like that, and they start speaking like that and they say, they make fun of it, that's why I rather don't say anything.

Luzma: Have they make fun of you?

Marcos: No, **that's why I rather don't say anything, because I see that it looks and one must feel bad**, how it looks that [others] make fun of you, and I don't want to feel like that...⁷³

⁷³ Luzma: ¿Tú te has dado cuenta de alguna diferencia en el trato con las personas que hablan lengua indígena? - Marcos: No porque no les platico casi yo a mis compañeros porque también te hacen burla, te dicen sabe qué y te comienzan a decir así de cosas, yo mejor no les digo nada... - Luzma: ¿Nunca les has dicho? - Marcos: Más o menos, nada más les digo que viven en Veracruz y que hablan totonaco - Luzma: ¿Eso lo decidiste tú o tus papás te lo recomendaron? - Marcos: No, yo lo decidí porque un compañero también le hacían burla y por eso yo no quiero que me hagan burla y por eso no les he dicho - Luzma: ¿Qué tipo de burla le hacían? - Marcos: Le dicen que su papá sabe qué, y le comienzan a hablar, ya ve que sale en la tele así de eso, y le comienzan a hablar así y le dicen así, le hacen burla ahora, por eso es

Marcos had clearly made an individual decision to avoid discrimination by opting not to say anything about his family's language. He identified himself with the territory of his parents and with their language, but he seemed to refuse to be called 'indigenous' when he was in the field of the school. As a middle-class *mestiza* researcher, I led the discussion with the children using academic terms, like 'indigenous', that were definitely strange and even uncomfortable for them to use. This contradiction is what Dietz (2003) and Bertely (2000) calls the 'emic' and 'etic' perspective of ethnographic work. The 'emic' perspective is the analysis from the point of view of the actors, from the voices of the same children; while the 'etic' perspective is the academic metadiscourse about the actors.

'I feel ashamed of telling them': Luis

Like Lilia, Luis also shared with me experiences of discrimination related to his family's ethnicity. Luis was a boy in 3rd grade whose parents were from Pachuca, Hidalgo and were both Nahuatl speakers. He and his brothers were born in Guadalajara, but he spent some months in Pachuca in the kindergarten, while his parents were building his house in Guadalajara. Luis would have liked to live in Pachuca because it was more fun, but he remembered feeling ashamed in his school because he did not know how to speak Nahuatl. However, even though he said that he did not understand the language of his parents, he said that some of his neighbours here in the city made fun of the way he spoke.

Luis: ... some children, who live by my house, **make fun of me.**

Luzma: What do they say to you?

Luis: They say different things and make fun and say different things. They make up [things] and I don't know what they say... the other day they made fun of me a lot because I went outside to, I was going to, to buy an ice cream and they made fun of me...

Luzma: What did they tell you?

mejor no decir nada - Luzma: ¿A ti nunca te han hecho burla? - Marcos: No, por eso mejor yo no digo nada, porque yo veo que se ve y se ha de sentir muy mal cómo se ve que le hacen burla y yo no me quiero sentir así...

Luis: They said that, like I don't know what they said, but they made fun. They said, like, they said, **they called me 'guachuchao'** or I don't know how they called me.

[...]

Luzma: And how come these children who make fun of you, who live close to your home, knew that your parents speak Nahuatl?

Luis: **It's that they hear them when they are speaking**, when they are chatting or when, when [my dad tells my mum] to make him some coffee; they speak in their language, **and then [the children] hear**.⁷⁴

Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old

As seen in Luis's quote, the neighbourhood is not only a site of positive multicultural encounters but also a site of discrimination among different groups, not only against indigenous peoples but maybe against the "different other" in terms of gender, class, (dis)ability, and ethnicity.

Like Luis, for most of the indigenous children talking about discriminatory experiences was a painful event. Most were not able to describe in great detail the insults of the other children, they rather said 'I don't know what they said or 'I don't remember what they said'. I noticed a sense of uneasiness during the interviews when children talked about these incidents.

It seems that Luis understood and probably spoke more Nahuatl than he thought he could, or more than he said to me during our interview. He spent some of his early years in Pachuca and he remembered that all the people mostly speak Nahuatl.

Luzma: Do you know an indigenous person, Luis?

⁷⁴ Luis: ...porque unos niños se burlan, este, que viven cerca de mí en la calle - Luzma: ¿Qué te dicen? - Luis: Me dicen cosas diferentes y se burlan y me dicen cosas muy diferentes. Ellos inventan y quién sabe qué dicen... y la otra vez se burlaron mucho de mí porque yo salí afuera a, iba a ir a, iba a ir a comprarme este, una nieve y se burlaron de mí - Luzma: ¿Qué te decían? - Luis: Me decían que, sabe cómo me decían, qué me dijeron, pero se burlaron. Me decían, que sabe qué decían, me decían que, me decían "guachuchao" o sabe cómo me decían. [...] Luzma: ¿Y cómo es que estos niños que se burlan de ti aquí, que viven cerca de tu casa, supieron que tus papás hablaban Nahuatl? - Luis: Es que a ellos los oyen cuando están hablando, cuando están platicando o cuando, cuando le dice que haga un poquito de café hablan en su idioma y luego los escuchan.

Luis: No.

Luzma: No?

Luis: **I don't know how to speak.**

Luzma: Is an indigenous Nahuatl someone who knows how to speak?

Luis: Well, yes.

Luzma: Are your parents [Indigenous]?

Luis: Yes.

Luzma: Then, are you?

Luis: No.⁷⁵

Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old

It seemed that he experienced a divided feeling of uneasiness between the communities of origin of his parents and his current neighbourhood. Luis also felt uneasy when he went to the community of origin because he did not speak Nahuatl:

Luis: [I like studying here in the city better], because **here they speak Spanish** and there they speak Nahuatl, **I felt embarrassed because I didn't know to speak like that...**⁷⁶

Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old

Luis felt embarrassed 'there' in the community of his parents because he was not able to communicate. He also felt ashamed 'here' of sharing that he could speak some words in Nahuatl with his classmates:

Luzma: Do you feel embarrassed about saying that you know a little Nahuatl or that your parents speak Nahuatl?

Luis: Yes, because some children [who live] by my house say that I speak like, I don't know how... **they make fun...**

Luzma: They make fun, what do they tell you?

Luis: That they are, like: 'they speak in another language'...

⁷⁵ Luzma: ¿Tú conoces alguna persona indígena, Luis?- Luis: No - Luzma: ¿No?- Luis: Yo no sé hablar - Luzma: ¿Únicamente es indígena Nahuatl el que sabe hablar?- Luis: Pos sí - Luzma: ¿Tus papás sí son?- Luis: Mj - Luzma: ¿Entonces tú eres?- Luis: No

⁷⁶ Luis: [Me gusta más estudiar aquí], porque aquí hablan en español y allá hablan en Nahuatl, como que tenía vergüenza porque yo no sabía hablar así...

Luzma: Have they told you something like that here in the school too?

Luis: No because **I feel ashamed of telling** them, I've only told one classmate whose name is Jose. He [wanted to know] how they spoke and I've said that I don't know...⁷⁷

Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old

For Luis and his family, schooling was important because he wanted to be 'someone in life'. Schooling is the access to middle class occupations, as Luis mentioned, and he wanted to become a lawyer, a doctor, or an architect to accomplish his parents' expectations:

Luzma: Why is it important for your parents that you study?

Luis: So I learn more (he laughs)...

Luzma: Why do they want you to learn more?

Luis: So, when I grow up, **I become someone in life.**

Luzma: What do you mean by someone? Like whom?

Luis: like a doctor, a lawyer, an architect, a policeman, a soldier, and that's it, I don't know more...⁷⁸

Nahuatl, 3rd grade, 8-year-old

Schooling seems to give, at least in discourse, the tools to have access to middle class occupations, and to aspire to a better quality of life; the educational process does not seem to be concerned with strengthening the children's identities and promoting the construction of multiple ways of living or developing individual talents, as will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. It seems that the options for success are limited to four or five professions, most of them still associated with men as figures of power. Even though Luis wanted to live back in Pachuca where he said there was no

⁷⁷ Luzma: ¿Aquí te da vergüenza decir que sabes poquito Nahuatl o que tus papás hablan Nahuatl? - Luis: Sí, porque unos niños de por mi casa dicen que hablo como, como sabe cómo... se burlan... - Luzma: ¿Se burlan? ¿Qué te dicen? - Luis: Que ellos son, que hablan en otro idioma... - Luzma: ¿Aquí en la escuela también te han dicho eso? - Luis: No porque me da vergüenza decirles, nomás le he dicho a un compañero que se llama José. Me ha dicho cómo hablan y yo le he dicho que no sé...

⁷⁸ Luzma: ¿Por qué es importante para tus papás que tú estudies, Luis? - Luis: Para que aprenda más (se ríe) - Luzma: ¿Para qué quieren que aprendas? - Luis: Para que cuando sea grande, sea alguien en la vida - Luzma: ¿Cómo alguien? ¿Cómo quién? - Luzma: como doctor, como licenciado, como abogado, como arquitecto, como policía, como soldado, y ya nomás, ya no sé...

pollution, no traffic, and life was more secure and fun, the city and the aspirations of urban life through schooling offered better possibilities to improve their living conditions.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has attempted to show the complexities of the children's identity formation processes, beyond the use of the indigenous language.

Firstly, the relationships of *compadrazgo* promote the development of stronger family links between family members who live here and those who live there. The identity processes are re-signified in the cities in an individual and collective way, through social networks and *compadrazgos* as a survival strategy in new contexts (Czarny & Martínez, 2013, p. 267). As Chavez argues, 'the ethnic groups persist beyond its territorial movements since part of its integration is based on the setting of the kinship relationships. Within the families, all the elements that articulate the ethnic belonging are negotiated and reproduced, especially in those cases where there are processes of urban migration' (my translation Chávez, 2014, p. 20). The quality of the affective relationship within the family is an important indicator in the transmission of the ethnic identity (ibid.). As it was possible to see in some of the children's interviews, they receive different messages from their fathers and mothers regarding the value of their languages, and this affects the way children perceive their own identities. Mothers or fathers who have a resistance to using the language or do not feel comfortable with their ethnic identity, usually based on discriminatory experiences, seem to have an influence in the way children signify their own ethnicity, as was shown in the case of Lilia, in contrast with the cases of Marcos and Luis Miguel.

Secondly, it seems that children feel a stronger attachment to the communities of origin of their parents when they participate in the agricultural activities on their family land. Having a piece of land to work on during the children's visit seems to promote a feeling of responsibility and cooperation to take care of the family inheritance. The relationship of the children with their communities of origin is very important in the strengthening of their ethnic identities, however, the territory is also a 'symbolic resource' (Czarny & Martínez, 2013, p. 255); it is place that inspires nostalgic feelings, and the identification

with a collective identity, with a history that gives them a sense of ownership. It is important to problematise the concept of migrants, as they can be stigmatising concepts when peoples are outside their communities of origin. Most indigenous peoples have negotiated their extraterritoriality and they assign a membership from the outside, they create 'moral communities' (Martínez - Casas & De la Peña, 2004) within the extraterritoriality. They experience what Bartolome calls a 'cultural transfiguration' (1997, p. 73).

Thirdly, visiting the grandparents or other family members in the communities of origin often exposes children to highly enriching cultural experiences that connect them to the origins of their parents. It also provides children with the background to better understand the experiences of their parents and grandparents before migrating to the cities. For some children, however, visiting the communities of origin of their parents also presents facing the challenge of feeling lonely or inadequate because of their lack of language proficiency. Rescuing the indigenous children's mother tongue is a very important element in the process of dignifying and legitimising their ethnic identity. Most indigenous children expressed their motivation to learn their family's languages and joy for visiting their communities of origin for the aesthetic of the place and the contact with nature, the more relaxed rhythm of life and the security they experience, in contrast with the violence and dangers of the urban city.

Fourthly, the school does not represent a safe place for indigenous children to share their ethnicities. They prefer to remain invisible within a discriminatory environment that is intimidating to cultural and linguistic differences, and this seems to be part of the emotional habitus of indigenous children within urban settings (Cottingham, 2016; Reay, 2015). The school promotes a kind of homogenising citizenship in an active way (Bertely, 2006b). According to Bertely (2006), Mexican anthropology was mistaken when considering that citizenship and indigenous identities were mutually exclusive. Education policies should be directed towards reinforcing the identities of all children, not only the indigenous ones, in a way that promotes the recognition and celebration of all types of cultural differences. Indigenous children learn how to use their cultural capital within the discriminatory context of the school. They use their identities and their languages strategically, but their languages do not have a legitimate visibility in the school space, it is not linguistic capital. 'Schools and the life in the city would not

annulled the cultural and ethnic identity, moreover, it is a through [the school] that these indigenous immigrants are able to translate their new situations of life' (Czarny, 2006, p. 255). More research should be conducted to find out how languages operate as linguistic capital in the informal spaces of the schools, among indigenous children.

Part Three: Cultural diversity within the urban school

Chapter 6. Indigenous children and the school setting

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 analysed attributes related to ethnic identity other than indigenous language. The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the schooling experiences of indigenous children and explore the influences that habitus (individual and familial/communitarian) has in the way children represent themselves as school agents. When analysing the data, I was mindful of the following questions: What are the schooling experiences of indigenous children in urban schools? How do they signify their schooling experiences? What do they notice as ‘good’ and ‘bad’ students and teachers in their schooling experiences? What is school for? What are their aspirations? What influence do families’ educational experiences have on their own schooling experience and, therefore, on their identity formation processes? In this way, habitus and capital within the field of the school and the influence of the communities of origin came to have great importance when trying to understand the meaning of the schooling experiences of indigenous children.

6.2 ‘A good student makes a lot of effort’: The ‘ideal’ student

Most indigenous children’s views of a ‘good’ student highlight the attributes of the individual effort, auto-regulated work, obedience and respect to authorities, self-motivation and avoiding conflict, as shown in the following table (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Indigenous children’s attributes of a ‘good’ student

Indigenous girls	Attributes of a ‘Good’ student	Indigenous boys	Attributes of a ‘Good’ student
Acuamaryn ⁷⁹ (Purepecha, 6 th grade)	Accomplishes homework Likes studying	Juan ⁸⁰ (Purepecha, 3 rd grade)	Studies a lot Reads Doesn’t stand up

⁷⁹ Acuamaryn: Un buen estudiante es el que cumple con tareas, le gusta estudiar, le pone atención al estudio, le llama atención estudiar, que sí quisiera estudiar.

⁸⁰ Juan: [un buen estudiante] estudia mucho, leer, no levantarse, estar haciendo lo que le dice la maestra, poner atención, nomás yo digo que nomás eso. [Un mal estudiante] se para mucho, está platicando en clase, no estudia, no hace la tarea y juega cuando está la maestra y está brincando.

	Pays attention Likes to study		Does what the teacher says
Maritza (Totonaca, 6 th grade)	Makes effort Takes benefit from studying Pays attention to teachers Respects teachers Is good Is responsible	Manuel ⁸¹ (Purepecha, 3 rd grade)	Makes effort Studies a lot Doesn't fail
Silvia ⁸² (Purepecha, 3 rd grade)	He/she is not lazy Accomplishes homework Studies a lot Diligent	Marcos ⁸³ (Totonaco, 6 th grade)	Accomplishes homework Does the work that the teacher orders Doesn't fight S/he isn't lazy S/he doesn't copy
		Luis ⁸⁴ (Nahua, 3 rd grade)	Is always studying Is always at home studying and reading Doesn't go out to play

Youdell argues that students' identities are constructed through 'dichotomies of *good/bad students* and *acceptable/unacceptable* and even *ideal/impossible learners*' (Youdell, 2006, p. 30). Those categories are embedded in educational and social discourses that include or exclude certain learner identities. Some students internalise

⁸¹ Manuel: [un buen estudiante] le echa muchas ganas a la escuela, estudia mucho [un mal estudiante] no puede estudiar, lo reprueban muchos de esos si no reprueban los castigan. Si lo castigan mañana no tiene que venir hasta el lunes o si no hasta mañana pasado.

⁸² Silvia: No es huevón, cumple con las tareas... los buenos estudiantes son muy estudiosos, siempre hacen la tarea, son aplicados.

⁸³ Marcos: buen estudiante cumple con tareas, hace los trabajos que manda el maestro, hace su tarea, no pelea, está bien pues. Un mal estudiante no hace nada, solo está de flojo ahí mirando a ver qué hace los demás, copiando...

⁸⁴ Luis: El mal estudiante es el que casi no estudia y que siempre sale a la calle a jugar y no se pone a estudiar y nomás anda saliendo a la calle [...] un buen estudiante siempre estudia, siempre está en su casa estudiando, leyendo.

these discourses and, therefore, reinforce the dichotomies, hard-working/lazy, dirty/clean, obedient/disobedient, as shown in Table 6.1.

In addition to this, students seem to be buying in strongly into discourses of meritocracy and individual effort, as shown in Maritza's and Luis's quotes:

Maritza: A good student **makes a lot of effort**, because there are children who wish to go to school, and others go but don't take benefit from it. In my [neighbourhood] there are children who don't go to school, I believe it's because their parents don't have money to send them. [In order to be a good student] I should **make an effort**, be good, pay attention to teachers, respect teachers, be good with the people around me, be responsible with people around me, and be good with my family.⁸⁵

Totonaca, 6th grade.

Luis: [I would change in my school] that my classmates do not stand up **when the teacher is out**, that they don't yell and chat when the teacher is speaking on the phone.⁸⁶

Nahua, 3rd grade

Maritza's quote also highlights that indigenous children see education not as a right but as a privilege, noting the difference in opportunities other children have around her neighbourhood. Luis also shows the importance that the school habitus places on self-regulation, where students are expected to behave well even when the teacher is not in the classroom. As argued by Shilling, schooling insists on exercising disciplinary power over children's bodies:

Yet one has only to think of the attempts of teachers to get young children to dress themselves 'properly', ask to go to the toilet in time for accidents

⁸⁵ Maritza: Un buen estudiante le está echando ganas porque es que hay unos niños que, que también quisieran ir a la escuela y otros van y no aprovechan pues. En [donde yo vivo] hay niños que no van a la escuela, creo que no tienen dinero sus papas para mandarlos. [Para ser buena estudiante] debo echarle ganas, ser Buena, hacer caso a los maestros, respetar a los maestros, ser Buena con los que me rodean, ser responsable con las que me rodean, ser Buena con mi familia.

⁸⁶ Luis: [Yo cambiaría en la escuela] que mis compañeros no se paren cuando se va la maestra y que ya no griten y que no platiquen cuando la maestra está hablando por teléfono.

to be avoided, sit still and be quiet during lessons, and respect daily rituals such as morning prayers or saluting the national flag, to realise that the moving, managed and disciplined body, and not just the speaking and listening body, is central to the business of schooling. (Shilling, 2003, p. 19)

Based on these indigenous children's perceptions, merit and effort is what guarantees academic success, as Skegg points out:

Self-responsibility and self-management, precisely the features identified by Giddens, become the mechanisms by which class inequality is reproduced and refigured, individualized as a marker of personal volition and inclusion, excluding groups from belonging and participating through assumptions about their own take up of a particular form of agency, one to which they do not have access. (Skeggs, 2004, p. 60)

Some indigenous children reported these characteristics of merit and individual effort as a general profile of a 'good/bad' student; later on in this chapter, I will present an analysis of their self-perceptions as students.

6.3 'Children need more attention': The 'ideal' teacher

For most indigenous children, teachers should have a better temper. It was very common to hear children complaining about teachers getting upset over the lack of discipline within the classroom. Very often, children made reference to physical punishment or irrational consequences if they did not submit the homework on time. For example, some teachers asked students to submit homework the next day even if had not attended or they would take them out of the classroom.

Ana Rosa: Some [teachers] **reprimand us** out of anything, they are very **grumpy**. [One teacher] takes children out of the classroom if they don't do homework.⁸⁷

Purepecha, 5th grade

⁸⁷ Ana Rosa: algunos [maestros] nos regañan de la nada y son muy regañones. [Una maestra] saca a los niños que no hacen tarea.

Some children complained that they did not have a telephone or the means to go to other children's houses to find out what the homework was about. Many children described an ideal/good teacher in terms of their way of talking to them: not being grumpy, not yelling and not scolding (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Indigenous children's attributes of a 'good' teacher

Indigenous girls	Attributes of a 'Good' teacher	Indigenous boys	Attributes of a 'Good' teacher
Acuamaryn ⁸⁸ (Purepecha, 6 th grade)	Is not grumpy Doesn't yell every little time Should teach us Should motivate us Isn't selfish Cares about her/his students	Juan ⁸⁹ (Purepecha, 3 rd grade)	Explains well Gives time to finish Doesn't scold you if your finish later Doesn't go out to chat Doesn't tell you to do one page without explaining how to do it
Maritza (Totonaca, ⁹⁰ 6 th grade)	Doesn't scold Doesn't hit Explains until you understand	Diego ⁹¹ (Purepecha, 4 th grade)	Assists and helps Doesn't scold
Silvia (Purepecha, 3 rd grade)	Responsible Doesn't hit you Doesn't go out of the classroom without leaving you		

⁸⁸ Acuamaryn: El maestro ideal... es que no sea regañón, que no estuviera gritando a cada ratito, como el maestro pues el maestro Efraín, me cae bien, pero a veces no, es muy enojón... Para poder aprender más [me gustaría] que nos enseñaran, pues como ellos saben pero motivándonos para aprender los temas, las lecciones y todo eso... [...] A un mal maestro no le importa lo que saquemos, no le importa como vayamos en calificaciones, no sé un maestro que sea egoísta, que no se, que no le importen sus alumnos, solo el que estudie y si lo sacan mal que no le importe, si lo sacan bien no le importa...

⁸⁹ Juan: [un buen maestro] tiene que explicarles bien a los alumnos, portarse bien en lo que sacan... no sé mucho de lo que tiene que hacer el maestro... [Mi maestra] nos explica, nos da mucho rato para hacer los exámenes y no nos regaña si terminamos al ultimo y porque dice que si terminamos al último es porque estamos leyendo bien y dice que no son carreritas a ver quien sabe más, por eso no nos dice nada [...] [un mal maestro] se sale a platicar y no nos dice nada, dice hagan eso y no nos explica y no nos dice lo que tenemos que hacer, solo dice hagan esa página y no nos explica cómo es y de qué, o nomás dice la tarea y no dice en qué cuaderno y así...

⁹⁰ Maritza: Un buen maestro no regaña, te explica, te explica si no entiendes y te vuelve a explicar hasta que entiendas y no pegaba [...] Todos los maestros en esta escuela enseñan bien, te explican todo lo que deben aprender en el grupo que van.

⁹¹ Diego: [un buen maestro] nos ayuda a hacer algo, pero que no nos regañe casi...

some work
Pays attention to
you
Doesn't get angry if
you ask him/her
something

Some indigenous children complained that some teachers leave the classroom to chat and they just give them some pages of a textbook to complete without further explanation, as Silvia explains:

Silvia: A bad teacher is irresponsible, **s/he throws the eraser at you, s/he pulls your hair, s/he lies down on the desk. S/he goes out of the classroom** without giving you some work to do, s/he doesn't give you a class, and doesn't tell you what to learn. S/he asks questions and we answer him/her back and s/he **reprimands us**. We must tell the teachers, make them see that children need more attention, more discipline, not saying bad words, not fighting in the bathroom...⁹²

Purepecha, 3rd grade

The lack of commitment of some teachers to the right of students to learn is visible through Acuamaryn's quote:

Acuamaryn: Sometimes, my teacher Efraín says, 'I come to the school and **I still get paid, it doesn't matter if you fail or not...**'⁹³

Purepecha, 6th grade

I asked Acuamaryn who was responsible for getting students to learn and she replied:

⁹² Silvia: Un mal maestro es irresponsable, te avienta el borrador, te jala de las greñas, se acuesta en la mesa. Se sale del salón y no nos pone nada... se sale del salón, no da clases, no nos pone atención, nos dice lo que debemos aprender, nos pregunta, le preguntamos algo y nos regaña. Hay que decirles a los maestros, hacerles ver que los niños necesitan más atención, más disciplina, no decir groserías, no pelearse en el baño...

⁹³ Acuamaryn: : mi maestro Efraín a veces así es, dice "yo vengo a la escuela y a mi me siguen pagando, no importa si ustedes reprueban o no"...

Acuamaryn: It is our [responsibility], we are the ones who should study because my **mum buys all the materials** that we need and if we have everything and we don't need more, then it is **our responsibility**⁹⁴.

The responsibility of the teacher is not embedded in Acuamaryn's perspective, which highlights the pressure that families and children have on their own educational success. Children know what a good teacher might look like; however, they compare this ideal teacher with a lack of commitment to their learning processes and the lack of preparation of their lessons. They feel that teachers give them irrelevant activities to complete by themselves but which have no learning purposes.

Marcos: A good teacher does teach you everything well. He/she explains well; and a bad teacher does not [explain], he/she **just tells you what you have to do and does not explain more**. I had a teacher with whom **we only did one thing all day long**, one page of the book and we didn't do anything else. We kept talking, playing and that was it. With the teacher we have now, we have to **make an effort**, because we don't know much, we didn't make an effort in 5th grade, or the teacher didn't teach us well⁹⁵.

Totonaca, 6th grade

As Marcos notes, there is an academic lag that children experienced since they started primary school compared to that the curriculum says they should have known by Grade 6. Although this is true for indigenous and Non-indigenous children, indigenous children who entered school with little linguistic capital face more challenges in their schooling experiences (that is the case of Silvia and Alondra as will be discussed later in this chapter); the first and second grades are crucial for them to learn the social and linguistic skills that are necessary to succeed at school. Marcos explains further:

⁹⁴ Acuamaryn: Pues de nosotros, porque nosotros debemos de estudiar, porque mi mama nos compra todo el material que ocupamos y así y ya si tenemos todo y no necesitamos pues ya es nuestra responsabilidad.

⁹⁵ Un buen maestro sí te enseña todo bien, te explica todo bien, y un mal maestro no, nada más te dice qué tienes que hacer y no te explica más, así como yo tuve un maestro que teníamos que nomás hacíamos una cosa todo el día, una página del libro y ya no hacíamos nada. Nos estábamos platicando, jugando y ya ahorita con el maestro que tenemos ya hay que echarle ganas porque no sabemos muy bien, porque no le echamos ganas en quinto, no nos enseñó bien el maestro pues (Marcos – Totonaca).

Marcos: Now the teachers don't go to chat in other classrooms. When I was in **first grade**, the **teacher used to leave** [the classroom] and the children went out and fought. Once a child got injured in the head, but the teacher didn't notice because he didn't bleed much and since he used to sit in the corner of the classroom, he got hit and they said that he fall asleep. [...] Now, I would say that everybody is studying, it is not like in the old times, and another teacher we had in **third grade**, **he didn't teach us anything too**, he only asked us to do something and other classmates used to chat with him and everybody used to do whatever they wanted, and now it is not like that, we study better in order to be a better person tomorrow. **Since we didn't do anything in first and second grade, in third grade we couldn't answer things** that the teacher asked us and she used to nag us because we didn't know. So we learnt with that teacher the things from second grade, and third grade when we were at **fourth grade**, and the **teacher used to get mad because we didn't learn** in third grade and that teacher used to **pull your hair** if you didn't know. She slapped a girl and threw her notebook and things like that. If they were her children, she wouldn't treat them like that, but since they weren't ... They can reprimand them, send a note to their homes or **punish them**, but **they shouldn't hit them**; that's not okay. **Nobody said anything to the principal**, it made me feel bad to see how another person was hit or mistreated. I think nobody said anything to the principal because **they were afraid of the teacher**.⁹⁶

Totonaca, 6th grade

⁹⁶ Ya los maestros no se van a platicar a otros salones. Cuando iba en primero la maestra se iba y salen unos y se pelean, hasta una vez un niño descalabró a otro, pero no se dio cuenta la maestra porque no le sangró mucho, nada más se hizo así y le alcanzó a salir sangre y como se sentaba hasta la esquina del salón, ahí se pegó y ya dicen que se quedó dormido [...] ahora yo digo que ya no, ya todos están estudiando, no como antes, y otro maestro que teníamos en tercero, ese casi tampoco nos enseñaba, nada más nos ponía hacer algo y otros compañeros se ponían a platicar con el maestro y cada quien estaba haciendo lo que quería y ya pos ahorita ya no, ya nos ponemos a estudiar mejor para ser una persona de provecho el día de mañana. Como casi no hacíamos nada en primero y en segundo, ya entramos a tercero y nos preguntaba cosas así y no sabíamos y nos regañaban que porque no sabíamos y con esa maestra estudiamos lo de segundo y lo de tercero cuando entramos a cuarto nos regañaba la maestra porque no aprendimos en tercero y la maestra de cuarto si no hacían la tarea les jalaba el cabello, a una niña le dio una cachetada, les tiraba la libreta y así. Si fueran sus hijos no los trataran así, pos como no son, que nomás los regañen pues, o les pongan un recado, que los castiguen pero que no los golpeen, no está bien. Nadie le dijo nada al director, se siente mal como ves a otros cómo los golpean, como los maltratan. Yo creo que no le dijeron al director porque les daba miedo que los regañara algo la maestra, yo creo que por eso no les dijo. (Marcos – Totonaca)

Marcos and his mother, Alejandra, are very conscious about the poor quality of education they are receiving. She often speaks to the teachers in relation to her children's performance. She says that one of the first grade teachers in particular does not teach very well:

Alejandra: Yes, it's been one year since Luis Miguel is in her class, like I said that teacher teaches very badly, like I tell [my children] 'the little she teaches you, you must take advantage of that little that she teaches you' because [the children] say 'she **goes outside the classroom to chat**', and I tell them: 'no, you just **play along** with the teacher and [learn] the little she teaches you'.⁹⁷

Totonaca mother

The message is to take advantage of the educational system as much as possible, to 'play along' with it, within a voice of a disempowered habitus that does not allow the possibility of challenging the teacher to do her job. The expectation is not placed on the educational process *per se*, but in getting the certification that might open the possibilities for better job opportunities. The school context seems to be an intimidating one in terms of the power relations that Alejandra feels unable to challenge. Alejandra seems to be teaching her children a sense of constraint that might be helping them to learn to navigate the system in a 'safe way' and at the same time in a restricted way.

Another example of disempowered habitus was the case of Gabriela, the mother of Andrea and Sofía. Her husband was a Nahuatl speaker. She had decided to enrol her children in the Violeta Parra School (private), even though it is difficult for them to pay the fees; however, she was not happy with the education they were receiving:

Gabriela: ... Because they do a lot of changing of teachers, suddenly everything is working fine and later: 'no mum, the persons who cleans [the school] gave me [some work], she came to set us some work and then she left', and later the

⁹⁷ Porque la maestra Juana hace un año, sí hace un año que está Luis Miguel con ella, le digo: "no, esa maestra sí enseña muy mal, les digo, porque lo poquito que les enseña, ustedes deben de aprovechar eso poquito que les enseña", porque lo que dicen: "no, pos se sale la maestra a platicar", y les digo: "no, pos, si tú también le sigues la corriente a la maestra cuando llegue y lo poquito que te enseñe..." (Alejandra, madre totonaca).

children hear that the teachers had left [the school] and they I say, we do not like those things, **but well, they are there ...**⁹⁸

In Gabriela's account, a mixed discourse of acceptance is noticeable and a degree of resignation is evident. These passive reactions to the failure of the educational system that is not responding to their needs are part of the indigenous girls' habitus.

6.3.1 'I wish the teacher wouldn't be yelling every little time': Schooling experiences and violence

The early experiences of children in the first grades are not reported as pleasant. They seem to learn that the school is rather hostile, reproducing a docile approach to education rather than empowering and developing resilient children. It is not my intention to generalise in any way the mistreatment of some students by some of the teachers, but it is the purpose of this dissertation to give children a voice for their schooling experiences. In trying to be loyal to these voices, I also report that there also have been very positive experiences with some teachers, like those I will present in the following chapter, where there are exemplary and committed teachers, as Lilia expresses it:

I liked the school very much because my teacher, Estela, taught us things that I didn't know. I wouldn't have known that I had an eye infection if it wasn't for her. Once we were in the classroom, she asked me to stand up and see the blackboard and I was at the very back and I couldn't read and she said, 'Come closer', and I had to go very close to the blackboard in order to read.⁹⁹

Nahua, 5th grade

I was able to collect a few positive experiences of the indigenous children with their teachers. Acumaryn, for example, remembers a teacher in first grade who very good

⁹⁸ ...porque hacen muchos cambios de maestras, ¿no? De repente pues, todo está marchando bien y pues... al rato: "no mama, que me dejó la que hace el aseo, este, vino a ponernos un trabajo y después se salió" y luego los niños se enteran de que el maestro se fue de la escuela, o sea digo, esas cosas no nos agradan pero pos aquí están.

⁹⁹ Pues me gustó mucho la escuela porque la maestra Estela me enseñó cosas que yo no sabía y que yo no hubiera sabido que estaba enferma de los ojos si no fuera por ella, porque una vez estábamos en el salón y dijo que me parara y viera del pizarrón hasta mi lugar y mi lugar era hasta el fondo y no le leía y me dijo acércate más y me tuve que acercar mucho al pizarrón para poder leerle... (Lilia – Náhuatl)

and supportive. She remembered that she was very sad because her father had left her family and went to live in a different city. She did not want to go to school any more, but the teacher was very supportive:

Acuamaryn: He said that **it didn't matter how I felt**, that I needed to make an effort to study because if my dad were here, he would like me to get good grades, and then I studied a lot.¹⁰⁰

Purepecha, 6th grade

However, children (indigenous and non-indigenous) shared on several occasions, experiences of physical punishment in the Simon Bolivar School.

Acuamaryn: [I wish] **the teacher wouldn't be yelling every little time**; like, the teacher I have is very grumpy. My teacher, Isabela, she is very grumpy, she used to throw erasers at everybody. [I wish] the teachers would teach us how they know, but motivating us for learning, the themes, the lessons and all that.¹⁰¹

Purepecha, 6th grade

Pamela: Many girls and boys here at the school, in the classroom, have **been hit with the eraser** because they do not understand. My teacher hits them with his hand, he hits them with an eraser, and those who do not understand, he **pulls their hair**, but he hasn't done that to me yet¹⁰²

Purepecha, 4th grade

¹⁰⁰ Acuamaryn: Tuve un buen maestro, me motivaba mucho porque a veces me ponía triste porque mi papa se había ido, y pues a veces me enojaba mucho con mi papa porque se fue y el maestro decía que no importaba cómo me sintiera y que le echara ganas a estudiar porque si tal vez si mi papá estuviera aquí quisiera que yo sacara buenas calificaciones y sí estudié mucho...

¹⁰¹ Que el maestro no estuviera gritando a cada ratito, como el maestro que tengo es muy enojón. La maestra Isabela ella sí es muy enojona, le aventaba los borradores a todos. Que los maestros nos enseñaran pues como ellos saben, pero motivándonos para aprender, este los temas, las lecciones y todo eso... (Acuamaryn – Purépecha)

¹⁰² A muchas niñas y niños de aquí de la escuela, del salón les han pegado con el borrador porque no entienden. Mi maestro les pega con la mano, les pega con el borrador y los que no entienden sí les jala las greñas, pero a mi nunca me ha llegado a pegar. (Pamela – Purépecha)

Maritza: Here, there is a teacher that, if you do not know something, **she blows up and hits you**. I would say that if [someone] doesn't know something, that he/she should be told it again, but they shouldn't be beaten...¹⁰³

Totonaca, 6th grade

I understand that current political educational issues in Mexico has led to teachers' discontent and frustration (Echenique & Muñoz, 2013), and most of them work in precarious conditions in schools with minimum resources and with high levels of stress for meeting administrative demands and evaluation standards (Calderon, 2016; INEE, 2017) . This is also part of an institutional habitus; however, I do consider it necessary to give children a voice in this process, transcending the expectations of the policy makers, public figures in the political scenes and even academic experts. Children have a very clear idea of what they expect from school and their teachers, at least in term of respect and motivation for learning, as Acuamaryn stated. Children share their negative experiences at school but they do not have the means of transforming the situation. Children need to know their rights and be assured that will be respected and guaranteed. As Theron, Liebenberg and Malindi suggest in their research on the Pathways to Resilience in South Africa, 'when schooling experiences are supportive of child rights, resilience processes are promoted' (2014, p. 253).

6.4 Learner identities: merit and hard work

The previous sections described the indigenous children's perceptions of the 'ideal' student and teacher. In this section, I present their self-representation in terms of their learner identities as their own experiences and reflections as students. Table 6.3 shows a summary of these findings.

Table 6.3 Indigenous children's learner identities

Gender	Name and Grade	Ethnicity	Self-description
	Alondra 6 th grade	Purepecha	I am intelligent and sometimes I get good grades . Maths is very difficult; the teacher only gives us 5

¹⁰³ Aquí hay una maestra que si no sabes algo, te avienta algo y te pega. Yo digo que si no sabe, que le digan otra vez, pero no que les peguen.... A una niña le jaló el pelo (Maritza – Totonaca)

Girls			minutes to finish and I mostly don't like maths because it's difficult ¹⁰⁴
	Ana Rosa 5 th grade	Purepecha	Almost always I try to attend to school and be on time ¹⁰⁵
	Acuamaryn 6 th grade	Purepecha	I got 7.4 and it was the second best grade in my class. The child who got first place got 7.8. In my house, I was the best grader, but I have fun too, I like to be friends with everyone. In first grade, I got a diploma for being the first in the class and from then on a girl didn't speak to me because I got first place. The teacher said that if we don't get good grades, we'll be send to a secondary school that is too far away, and I want to be in one that is close to my house ¹⁰⁶ .
	Maritza 6 th grade	Totonaca	I got 9 in first and second grade and now I got 8, I have never gotten an 8. I always finish my work and then I chat with my friends, as the teacher says ¹⁰⁷
	Silvia 3 th grade	Purepecha	I am doing more or less OK at school, sometimes miss school , I don't do my homework and the teacher like... since nobody lives by my house, nobody from my class, and [the teacher] says that I must ask for the homework and I tell him that nobody lives nearby, and he reprimands me. If you miss school, you must bring the homework the next day, and he says that we must bring the homework anyway, but nobody lives nearby. I do regular [at school], not well nor bad, I make an effort, and sometimes that I don't make an effort is because I seat down and my friends distract me ¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Alondra: Soy inteligente, a veces saco buenas calificaciones. Matemáticas es muy trabajoso para hacerlo, el maestro cuando nos dice que hagamos algo nomás nos da 5 minutos para terminarlo y casi no me gustan las matemáticas porque es muy trabajoso.

¹⁰⁵ Ana Rosa: Casi siempre trato de no faltar y ser puntual.

¹⁰⁶ Acuamaryn: Yo me saqué 7.4 y fui el segundo lugar en mi salón y el primer lugar sacó 7.8. En mi casa yo era la más alta de calificación, igual que muchos, me divierto igual... a mi me gusta juntarme con todos [...] Cuando estaba en primero me saqué Diploma de Primer Lugar y desde entonces una niña no me habla porque saqué el primer lugar... El maestro dijo que si no sacábamos Buena calificación, nos mandaban a una secundaria muy lejos y yo quiero que me toque en la más cerquitas.

¹⁰⁷ Maritza: En primero y Segundo llevaba 9 y 10 y ahorita saco 8, nunca había sacado 8... como el maestro dice que primero tenemos que terminar todo y luego ya si queremos platicar un ratito mientras que todos acaban... pues yo primero acabo todo...

¹⁰⁸ Silvia: Me va más o menos en la escuela, a veces no vengo, no hago la tarea y el maestro no, como por ahí por mi casa casi nadie vive de por ahí, del salón, y dice que tengo que pedirle la tarea y dice el

Boys	Marcos 6 th grade	Purepecha	I do well at school but sometimes I don't submit the work because I don't finish on time and sometimes I am chatting ¹⁰⁹
	Luis 3 rd grade	Nahua	I behave more or less at school because when the teacher is out of the classroom, I keep chatting; my friends come to my seat and we start chatting ¹¹⁰
	Diego 4 th grade	Purepecha	I am the only one boy in the “frame of honour” , there are only girls... ¹¹¹
	Hugo 5 th grade	Purepecha	I don't play, I have the tradition of studying at school, and there are other children who just walk around, stand up, hit other children or make noise. I only chat when the teacher is out of the classroom and when I don't have anything to do ... but my friends bother me, that's what I don't like, they bother me when I'm studying ... My teacher says that it is more important to learn literacy and maths. She says that they are all we need to pass the grade ¹¹²
	Marcos 6 th grade	Totonaca	I am more or less a good student. Sometimes I don't pay attention and when I am required to do some work, I don't know what to do because I didn't listen to what the teacher said. Since I was in first grade, I have gotten diplomas, from first to fifth grade. When we have flag salutation, you get the diplomas. I want to have another one in sixth grade ¹¹³

maestro que tenemos que pedir la tarea y le digo que porque nadie vive por ahí y ya nos regaña... si no vemos al siguiente día tenemos que traer la tarea que nos dejaron y yo les digo que por ahí por mi casa no vive nadie y dice que de todos modos tenemos que tener la tarea... A mi me va regular, ni bien ni mal, le echo ganas y hay veces que no le echo ganas porque cuando me siento con mis amigas me distraen
¹⁰⁹ [Me gusta la escuela] [Me va bien] pero a veces no entrego los trabajos porque no alcanzo [porque] a veces ando platicando.

¹¹⁰ [me porto más o menos en la escuela] porque cuando se va la maestra nomás se quedan hablando, vienen a mi lugar y nomás me quedo platicando.

¹¹¹ En el cuadro de honor nadie sale más que yo... son puras niñas

¹¹² Yo no soy así, yo no juego, yo tengo la costumbre de estudiar más en la escuela y como que ellos nomás se la pasan pensando en los otros compañeros, haciendo que se paren, que golpeen a los otros, que hagan desorden, que se la pasen platicando en clases y yo nomás platico con mi compañera pero nomás cuando la maestra no está y cuando no tengo cosas que hacer, pero cuando estoy estudiando, me andan molestando y es lo que no me gusta de ellos que nomás me molestan cuando ando estudiando. Dice mi maestra que vale más aprender Español y matemáticas que con eso pasa el año...

¹¹³ Yo soy más o menos, a veces no pongo atención y cuando me mandan hacer el trabajo pos ya no sé que voy a hacer, a veces no escucho lo que dice el maestro y ya por eso... Desde que entré a la primaria he sacado primero hasta quinto diploma. Cuando entregan la bandera dan diplomas, desde primero hasta quinto y quiero tener otro de sexto.

Getting good grades, doing homework, attending school, being on time, doing the work that the teacher asks and not chatting with their classmates were the categories that most indigenous children mentioned as part of their learner identities. I argue that indigenous students have been able to navigate the school habitus by recognising the norms, beliefs, and expected behaviours. They have learned the school language to the detriment of their own mother tongues, as Thomson (2017) argues. Some children learn the school language and, therefore, are more likely to be successful and be treated better by teachers than other children, as shown in Alondra's quote:

Alondra: There are some children that the teacher say that are more intelligent, and they get treated well, and those who they say they thick, they are treated bad....¹¹⁴

(Purepecha, 6th grade)

Schools reproduce a *doxa* of meritocracy where individuals advance based on their own merits and become part of the habitus (Thomson, 2017). Reay follows Layton's (2009) ideas that, 'the hegemony of neoliberalism and the dominance of free market globalisation have created ever more pressure to construct independent, autonomous, entrepreneurial identities that repudiate the vulnerable and needy parts of the self' (Reay, 2015, p. 15).

Schooling creates a social capital that reproduces the status quo, but is not in any way transformative. As stated by Lewis:

Capital is an important concept because it helps explain the mechanisms and processes whereby 'meritocratic' organisations like schools reproduce social inequality. Understanding that issues other than individual merit and effort shape school outcomes challenges meritocratic narratives that suggest that people are successful solely because of their individual abilities and that schools reward effort and talent so that those who 'deserve' to excel in fact do so. Absent from this story are the vast inequalities in the types and quality of schooling

¹¹⁴ Alondra: Hay algunos que los que dice el maestro que son más listos pues los tartan más bien y los que de son burros los tratan mal...

experiences. Children arrive at school with different socially acquired resources, and they generally leave school with similarly differentiated rewards. These inputs and outcomes are not solely (or even mostly) related to individual effort or innate ability. That is how social reproduction works. (Lewis, 2005, p. 5)

Many children share the perception that they are responsible for their own academic achievement, which depends on the amount of effort and determination they invest in their school activities, as a product of the formation of a neoliberal subjectivity. The school reinforces a certain type of capital within a meritocratic system rewarded through effort and hard work.

6.4.1 High academic achievement within poor quality school

The Simon Bolivar School on 2006 achieved very low academic results in comparison with other schools in the State of Jalisco and at the national level (Figures 6.1 and 6.2); however, indigenous children are at the top of their classes in academic achievement, with the exception of Silvia, who seems to have difficulties with her literacy skills (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.1 Literacy achievement levels at the Simon Bolivar School (ENLACE 2006)

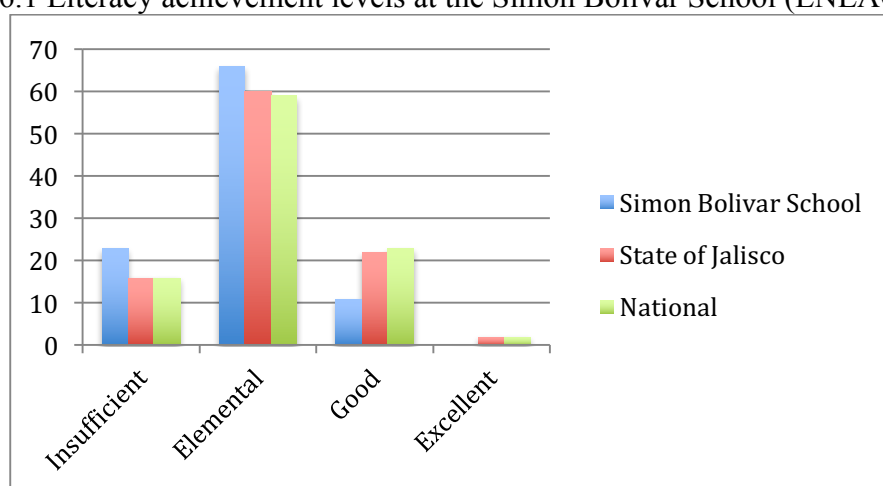


Figure 6.2. Maths achievement levels at the Simon Bolivar School (ENLACE 2006)

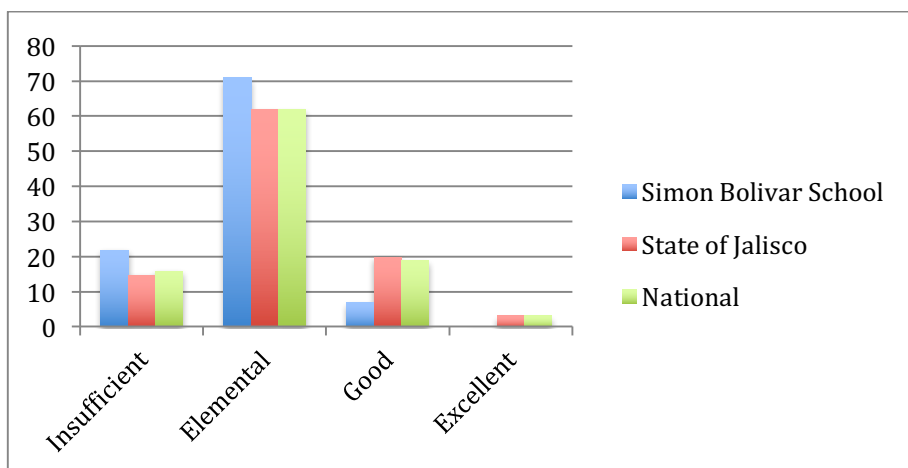


Figure 6.3 Achievement levels among indigenous children in the Simon Bolivar School

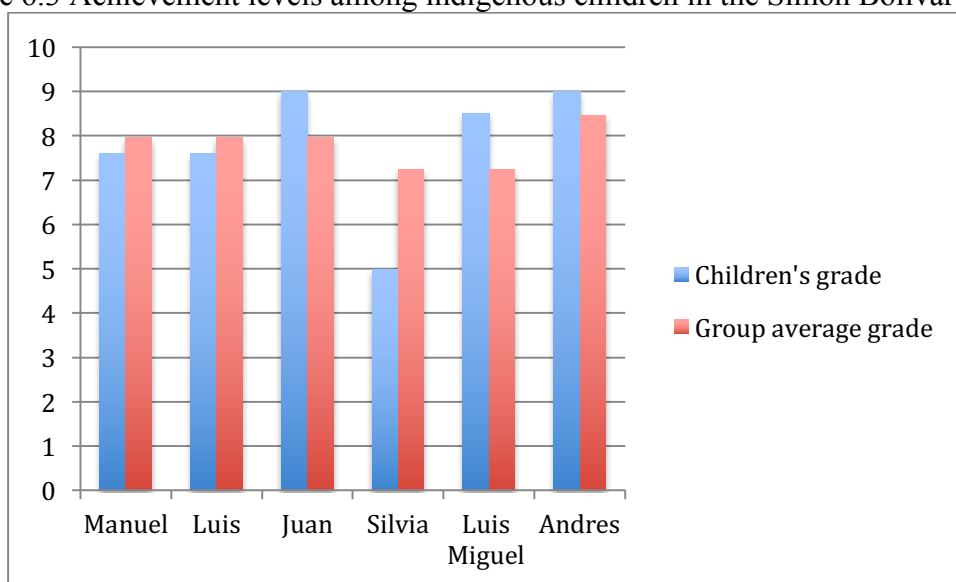
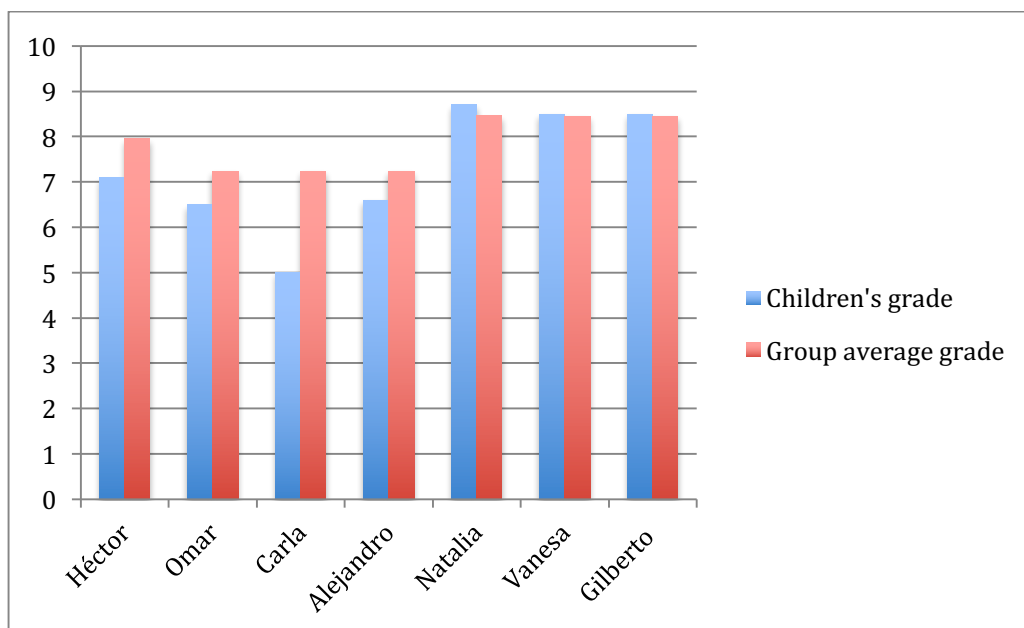


Figure 6.4 Achievement levels among non-indigenous children in the Simon Bolivar School



Five out of six of the children in sixth grade were among the top 10 in their classes in Literacy and among the top 15 in maths out of a total of 38 children, with the exception of Alondra, Silvia' sister. Their family seems to experience a strong sense of vulnerability, not only in economic terms but also in their cultural capital within the field of the school (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Sixth grade students' classroom positions in literacy and maths according to ENLACE results (2006)

	Position in Literacy	Position in Maths
Acuamaryn (Purepecha)	4	2
Andres (Nahua)	8	15
Maritza (Totonaca)	7	13
Marcos (Totonaca)	2	1
Alondra (Purepecha)	38	29

As was shown in the previous sections, indigenous children have associated their performance with a school habitus of hard work and effort, and a social identity that must avoid problems and be obedient. They have achieved the navigation of the institutional habitus and accomplished the expected social identities, as will be discussed in the following section.

6.5 Social identities: docility and avoid problems

‘Learner identities refer specifically to the conceptualizations children have of themselves as learners, but as with social identities, these are relational and pupils construct themselves and are constructed by others as particular types of learners in relation to both other pupils and their teachers’ (Reay, 2010, p. 279).

Learner and social identities sometimes overlap, but social identities cannot be transported onto learner identities (Reay, 2010). In fact, the expression of what children might perceive as being the good social characteristics of their personality in the classroom might result in disapproval and censure by the teacher. For instance, being cheerful, playful, smiling and funny could be interpreted by the teacher as being disruptive. Talkative in some Mexican classrooms could mean negative things. On the one hand, a talkative girl can be considered a participative and engaged student, but on the other hand, she can be considered a problematic and disruptive one. Being talkative can, in extreme cases, as explained by Ariagna, lead to repeating grades:

Luzma: Have you ever failed any grade?

Ariagna: Yes...third grade.

Luzma: Why did you fail?

Ariagna: It was because I talked too much during that year and they took points of... I was going to pass...but...[...] No, it was because I talked too much, that is why...¹¹⁵

(Mazahua, 4th grade)

6.5.1. ‘I don’t make a noise or anything’: girls, docility and schooling

Sofia, a Nahua girl in fourth grade, describes herself as follows:

I am a girl who is very quiet, I also like to play, I show respect and I am obedient. I do not fight. I never fight with anyone, much less with my classmates.

¹¹⁵ Luzma: ¿Has reprobado algún año? - Ariagna: Sí, el tercero - Luzma: ¿Por qué reprobaste? - Ariagna: A: Es que como hablé mucho ese año y por eso me quitaron los puntos...iba a pasar, pero...[...] No, es que como platicaba mucho y por eso...

Being a ‘good girl’ by being obedient and respectful and avoiding being a trouble-maker and lazy are also part of the repertoire most indigenous girls used to define themselves. However, unlike indigenous boys, girls did not make reference to being smart, intelligent, a good student, etc. It seems that the discourses of avoiding conflicts by being obedient and respectful are more important than their academic success.

Some indigenous girls are influenced by attitudes of obedience and respect. In this way, habitus gets embodied, not only in terms of ‘mental attitudes and perceptions’ (Reay, 2004b, p.432), but also in behaviours and ways to respond to daily interactions. As with any other patriarchal system, Mexican society reinforces attitudes of quietness, obedience and respect to authority in females, while at the same time, it punishes attitudes of aggressiveness, autonomy, defiance and rudeness. This is also mediated by the class, since most middle class girls not only have access to the more ‘liberal’ ideology of gender equality but also have the resources to invest in a more empowering education.

Being respectful, obedient, and kind and avoiding being a troublemaker and rude were the attributes that some girls used to represent themselves. Annette Laureau (2003) in her ethnographic study of child-rearing approaches among middle and working class families observed that children from working class families have a *sense of constraint*, while those from middle class families have a *sense of entitlement*. Laureau defined a *sense of constraint* as embodied in children who ‘were less likely to try to customize interactions to suit their own preferences. Like their parents, the children accepted the actions of persons in authority (although at times they also covertly resisted them)’ (Laureau, 2003, p. 6). On the other hand, the sense of entitlement of middle class children was observed, whereby ‘they acted as though they had a right to pursue their own individual preferences and to actively manage interactions in institutional settings’ (ibid).

6.5.2 ‘Every day, he comes very clean’: hard working and being clean

Most indigenous boys described themselves as clean and hardworking. Skeggs (2004) uses the term ‘respectability’ to show how the working classes try to follow certain

practices that are acceptable within middle class choices, routines and tastes in a search for ‘respectability’. Children seem to represent themselves using cleanliness and hard work as embodied characteristics, which can be utilised to socially ‘fit in’ as respectable, industrious and honest citizens. The following quotes are some examples of indigenous boys’ definitions:

Luis (Nahuatl): obedient, strong, **clean** and serious

Jose Miguel (Purepecha): respectful, good, kind, intelligent, **hard-working**, honest, friendly and **clean**

Juan Carlos (Purepecha): **hard-working**, attentive, sad, strong, friendly, playful, serious, happy and **clean**

Marcos (Totonaco): responsible, good, quiet, **hard-working** and intelligent

Andres (Nahuatl): **hard-working**, happy, intelligent, healthy, honest and trustworthy

Another salient characteristic associated with the concept of ‘respectability’ (Skeggs, 2004) is the notion of cleanliness. Colloredo-Mansfeld (1998) in his research in Ecuador, uses the term ‘hygienic racism’ to highlight this phenomenon that is present in many Latin American countries among indigenous populations. ‘Hygienic racism’, however, is not only associated with ethnicity but also functions as a marker of social class. When I asked Teacher Roxana about Jose Miguel, a Purepecha boy in her class, she said:

Luzma: Have you ever had students of a different ethnic origin? Indigenous?

Teacher Roxana: Well, two [students come] that are indigenous, one is Jose Miguel, the one that you take out with you, his mum is from Michoacan, from the indigenous there, and Paola, but those are children whose parents are among the most dedicated with them. Those [children] do not miss [school], every day they come **very clean** and they are in the ‘**frame of honour**’. Their parents, of the two of them, speak dialect, to which I say: ‘You should learn it, learn it’, ‘Ey no’ [they say]. They say they know only two or three words, then I say ‘listen to

your parents, so they can teach you that', but they **feel embarrassed**, they don't know, but the two of them come from indigenous parents.¹¹⁶

Reay talks about the 'demonization of the working classes' to explain this phenomenon in the UK context where, across time, the representation of the poor working classes has been associated with dirt (2004c, p. 1006). Cleanliness and tidiness seems to be a characteristic that is valued and reinforced within schools in a process that stereotypes minority groups. A clean child is more likely to be accepted by teachers and is considered to be a product of good parenting; however, it is also a marker of social class, a judgment based on placing middle class as a model (Walkerdine, Lucey, & Melody, 2001). Middle classes are more likely to escape embodiment in judgments of others since they are valued for their intellectual orientation. Class, gender and ethnicity become intertwined in children's perceptions, and as Ken (2008) suggests, they are all embodied in the daily experiences of children in a process where self-representation along with the recognition of differences have an essential role in their processes of identity formation.

Issues of ethnicity and class are intertwined in Lilia's experience. She does not feel confident of sharing her ethnicity at school and, at the same time, she prefers that school because of her social class, as shown in the following extract:

Lilia: In the school where my cousins attend, only rich people go **and I am not rich, that is why I prefer this school.**

Luzma: How do you notice they are rich people?

Lilia: Because of the way they speak and how they dress, very pretty...

Luzma: Do they wear a uniform?

Lilia: Yes, but the uniform is a good one, and even though they wear a uniform when they go out, they dress well and I don't. I have very few clothes, I only have two...¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Luzma: ¿Usted ha tenido alguna vez alumnos de origen étnico diferente, que sean indígenas? – Maestra Roxana: Pues vienen dos que son indígenas, que es José Miguel, el que saca, y su mamá es de Michoacán, de los indígenas de allá y Paola, pero son niños que sus papás son de los más dedicados con ellos esos no me faltan nunca, diario vienen muy bien aseados y están en los cuadros de honor, sus papás hablan dialecto de los dos, cosa que yo les digo: "Ustedes apréndanlo, apréndanlo", "ay no". Que se saben dos o tres palabritas, yo les digo: "escuchen a sus papás, para que nos enseñen eso", pero les da pena, no lo saben, pero ellos dos vienen de papás indígenas.

In Lilia's quote, it is possible to see how habitus is a 'sense of one's place' (Thomson, 2017), and how schools may be sites for reproduction rather than sites for transformation. In this way, 'perceptions become normative and invisible as arbitrary cultural constructions that endure' (Wallace, 2014).

6.6 'Life is more difficult if one doesn't study': Aspirations

Within the framework of community cultural wealth developed by Yosso (2005), as part of Critical Race Theory approach, **aspirational capital** refers to the 'parental transmission and maintenance of dreams and goals "beyond present circumstances" throughout the children's educational journeys despite "real or perceived barriers", and often, without the resources or other objective means to attain these goals' (Espino, 2016, p. 77). Table 6.4 shows the professional aspirations that indigenous children expressed during our interviews (four girls and three boys were unsure about what they wanted to be when they grew up).

Table 6.5 Professional aspirations of indigenous children

Name	Ethnicity	Gender	School Year	Professional aspiration	Desire to live in community of origin
Andrea	Nahua	Girl	5 th	Teacher	Conflicting
Luis	Nahua	Boy	3 rd	Lawyer	Yes
Ana Rosa	Purépecha	Girl	5 th	Teacher	Yes
Silvia	Purépecha	Girl	6 th	Policewoman	Conflicting
Acuamaryn	Purépecha	Girl	6 th	Doctor	Yes
Monica	Purépecha	Girl	5 th	Doctor	Yes
Arturo	Purépecha	Boy	4 th	Construction worker	Conflicting
Juan Carlos	Purépecha	Boy	4 th	Architect	Conflicting
Hugo	Purépecha	Boy	5 th	Doctor	No
Daniel	Purépecha	Boy	6 th	Policeman	No
Diego	Purépecha	Boy	4 th	Lawyer	Yes
Maritza	Totonaco	Girl	6 th	Vet	Yes
Luis Miguel	Totonaco	Boy	3 rd	"to be someone on life"	Yes
Ariagna	Mazahua	Girl	4 th	Forensic	Yes

¹¹⁷ Lilia: En la escuela de la Estancia están mis primos, pero allá van puros ricos y yo no soy rica, y por eso prefiero esta - Luzma: ¿Cómo sabes que son puros ricos?- Lilia: Todos hablan bien fresas y toda la cosa y todos se visten bien bonito y así..- Luzma: ¿No traen uniforme?- Lilia: Sí, pero el uniforme se ve que es así bueno, o sea no bueno, sino que sí llevan uniforme pero pues ya cuando van a salir así a la calle todos los que van en la estancia se visten bien y yo no, yo tengo bien poquita ropa, como nomás tengo dos...

Children's aspirations are very often related to middle class professional occupations; however, those occupations seem unrealistic when looking at the unequal socioeconomic indicators between indigenous and non-indigenous populations in Mexico. There is a very small chance of indigenous children finishing a university career. Only 1% of the indigenous youth in the age group of 18 to 24 attend higher education (Servín, 2017). Parents try to change the dispositions of the familial habitus by insisting their children keep on studying and try to achieve a university degree in order to have different living conditions from the ones they had in their communities of origin:

Marcos: when she was little, my mum was like the indigenous and they didn't allow her to study and she finished primary school, finished primary and she came here, she came with a grandma because there you see how they have to make *nixtamal* and all that...¹¹⁸

Totonaca, 6th grade

Alondra: My mum says that we are studying at least until secondary school because teachers say that that is mandatory [...] since [my parents] did not study, they say that it's easier to **find a profession** quicker than those who didn't study, that's why we should study...¹¹⁹

Purepecha, 6th grade

Later in our interview, Marcos explained in more detail the conditions in which his parents lived in Veracruz:

Marcos: ...they say it is almost the same [here compared to there], but there, it's harder to earn money than it is here. And there like... they wanted to have more,

¹¹⁸ Marcos: es que cuando era chiquita mi mamá eran como los indígenas y pues no la dejaban casi estudiar y terminó la primaria, terminó la primaria y se vino aquí, se vino con una abuelita porque allá, ya ve que tienen que hacer el *nixtamal* y eso y ya...

¹¹⁹ Alondra: La vida es más difícil si uno no estudia, por eso hay que estudiar, dice mi mamá que vamos a estudiar que por lo menos hasta la secundaria porque es lo único que las maestras dicen que tiene que ir a fuerzas a la secundaria... [...] como [mis papas] no estudiaron dicen que pueden encontrar una profesión más rápido que los que no estudian, que por eso tenemos que estudiar.

learn more too. And there like, women have to put in a lot of effort; my mum was able to complete primary school although her mum and her dad didn't want her to finish school because... like... there, they only have to learn to cook and to mend clothes and like... they work at home and the men grow corn and everything... it's what they do there and they decided, my mum, rather, [came here] because she was going to start secondary school but she couldn't there and then she preferred to come here with her uncle¹²⁰.

Totonaca, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Like Marcos, many other indigenous children's narratives provided accounts of the struggles their parents faced to continue studying because of the poverty and lack of opportunities in their communities of origin. But the some of their older siblings faced other struggles in order to finish basic education:

Monica: My dad works in the mmmm... making houses. My mum works in a house...

[...]

Luzma: And did your sisters continue studying?

Monica: No

Luzma: Until what grade did they study?

Monica: One until sixth grade, almost all of them until sixth grade; only the oldest studied until secondary and then my two brothers, no, my sister, she made it to second grade [of the secondary school], she was going to pass to third grade, but she dropped out... ¹²¹

In her family, none of her siblings have studied beyond secondary school. However, her parents' message was directed at motivating her to finish school:

¹²⁰ Marcos: ... es que dicen que es casi lo mismo, pero allá es más duro ganarse el dinero que aquí. Y allá pues... querían tener más, aprender más también. Y allá pues, las mujeres con esfuerzo mi mamá pudo terminar la primaria porque su mamá y su papá no la dejaban terminar porque...este... allá nomás se tienen que enseñar a hacer de comer y a remendar la ropa y ya este... y se dedican a la casa y los hombres a cultivar el maíz y todo... allá es lo que hacen y se decidieron mejor mi mamá porque allá iba a entrar a la secundaria pero no pudo porque allá no pudo ya, y ya mejor se vino con su tío.

¹²¹ Monica: Mi papá trabaja en la mmm, haciendo casas. Mi mamá trabajando en casa... - [...] - Luzma: ¿Y tus hermanas siguieron estudiando? - Monica: No - Luzma: ¿Hasta qué grado estudiaron? - Mónica: Uno hasta sexto, casi todos hasta sexto nomás la más grande estudió hasta secundaria y luego a mis dos hermanos, no mi hermana, llegó hasta segundo iba a pasar a tercero, se salió

Monica: [My parents say] that I [should] study, because they almost had no opportunity to study.

Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old

Table 6.5 shows indigenous children's perceptions of the purpose of school influenced by the experiences or discourses within their family habitus.

Table 6.6 Perceptions of indigenous children of the purposes of schooling

Gender	Name and Grade	Ethnicity	Self-description
Girls	Alondra 6 th grade	Purepecha	Life is more difficult if one doesn't study.
	Monica 5 th grade	Purepecha	My parents said that I should study because they weren't given the opportunity to do so. All my sisters studied until 6 th grade, only one until secondary. ¹²²
	Maritza 6 th grade	Totonaca	To have a job we need to study secondary, primary and preschool ¹²³ .
	Lilia 6 th grade	Nahua	My dad says 'we keep studying because now you have the chance and later you won't' ¹²⁴
	Acuamaryn 6 th grade	Purepecha	My mum said to my brother that high school wasn't so mandatory but that he should keep studying anyway ¹²⁵
Boys	Marcos 6 th grade	Purepecha	[We study] to be a better person, to be a useful person in the future ¹²⁶

As Reay suggests, 'an important aspect of *familial habitus* is the complicated compilation of values, attitudes and knowledge base that families possess in relation to the field of education. It is profoundly influenced by the educational experiences of the parents' (2016, p. 170). Some of the children expressed their aspirations in relation to the occupation of their family members. Family members provide role models; however, sometimes these role models contradict the family's expectations and messages given to children regarding their futures. Arturo, for instance, receives a great amount of encouragement to continue studying and to finish school from his brothers, who are illiterate and never attended school. Arturo, on the other hand, would like to start working with his brothers as a bricklayer as soon as possible to help his family economically:

¹²² Mónica: Mis papas me dicen que estudie porque a ellos casi no les daban la oportunidad de estudiar... Todas mis hermanas estudiaron hasta sexto, nomás una hasta secundaria

¹²³ Maritza: Para tener trabajo hay que terminar secundaria, primaria y preescolar...

¹²⁴ Lilia: Mi papa nos dice a nosotros "sigan estudiando porque ahorita tienen chance y para la próxima ya no van a tener".

¹²⁵ Acuamaryn: MI mama le dijo a mi hermano que ya la preparatoria no era tan obligatoria, pero le dijo, pero mi mama le dice que de todos modos se vaya a seguir estudiando, que si termina este año lo van a mandar a Michoacán a un internado que se llama La Casa del Estudiante en Morelia.

¹²⁶ Marcos: estudiar para ser una persona de provecho el día de mañana...

Luzma: What would you like to do when you leave primary school? Would you like to finish?

Arturo: Yes, teacher, my brother says that I should finish.

[...]

Luzma: Why does your brother tell you that?

Arturo: It's that I tell him that I want to work and then he says that not until I finish all of school.

[...]

Luzma: What would you like to work in?

Arturo: Well, like, err, like my dad.

Luzma: Like your dad? Would you like to work as a bricklayer?

Arturo: Yes.¹²⁷

Purepecha, 4th grade, 13-year-old

Around 70 per cent of the fathers work as bricklayers, and 70 per cent of the mothers as housekeepers, and most of them also work in the informal sector. Good health and a strong body are essential to ensuring the continuity of these types of occupations. In the following quote, Ariagna describes her family's occupations, the struggles they face to find a job and the reliance on the informal sector to make income:

Ariagna: My mum works in... cleaning like that... it is like she cleans the streets, I don't know how it's called, of, of... she works cleaning like that, she cleans the tiles that are set in the floor, she cleans in Paraisos, like in, Paraisos del Sol, I mean in Plaza del Sol, she cleans... [My grandma] works in avenues because she didn't get a job, that's why, my granddad works in making mud glasses, but since, I don't know why he got fired, but he was fired and now he works in avenues... I haven't gone [to the avenues] because I help my sister with the household chores, [before] we used to go on Saturdays to help, or to sell tuna or chewing gums or sweets...¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Luzma: ¿Qué te gustaría hacer cuando salgas de la primaria? ¿Te gustaría terminar? - Arturo: Sí maestra, dice mi hermano que hasta que termine. - [...] - Luzma: ¿Y por qué te dice eso tu hermano? - Arturo: Es que yo le digo que ya quiero trabajar y él luego dice que hasta que lo termine todo la escuela... - [...] - Luzma: ¿En qué te gustaría trabajar, Arturo? - Arturo: Este pues como, este pues como mi papá. - Luzma: ¿Como tu papá? ¿Te gustaría trabajar de albañil? - Arturo: Sí.

¹²⁸ Ariagna: Mi mamá trabaja en... en limpiar así... es como que limpia las calles de cómo se llama, de... de ...trabaja en limpiar así, limpia los azulejos así que están pegados en el piso, los limpia en Paraísos, en

Reay argues that for some working class children ‘ambitions are created under and against conditions of adversity’ (2002, p. 228). It is interesting to note that Arturo is the only indigenous boy who expressed his aspirations in terms of a working class occupation as a bricklayer, even though his parents wish him to continue studying so he can have access to a physically ‘lighter’ occupation:

Arturo’s father: Well what we want is that he works hard and that no, well, that he achieves something of, if not a career, at least a lighter job than me, but you see that all his brothers are in the construction as well...

Arturo’s mother: That’s what his brothers tell him, ‘No, you make an effort, you study’, because he says ‘No I am no longer going to go to school, I am going to work’. ‘No, not work, you make an effort to study so you can get a job where you don’t work like us, so you can get a good job...’

Arturo’s father: More, more, more lighter [work]. That is what we want, but well, we will make an effort...¹²⁹

Arturo’s parents, Purepecha migrants

For most parents, finishing at least basic education is an opportunity for their children to have access to better-paid and less physically demanding jobs:

Luis Miguel: ...it is said that my mum, here, she finished high school, secondary school... because high school [she couldn’t], because she couldn’t travel...

este, Paraísos del Sol, este, en Plaza del Sol, ahí limpia... [Mi abuelita] trabaja en avenidas porque es que como no se metió a un trabajo, por eso, este mi abuelito trabajaba en hacer vasos de barro...pero como es que no sé por qué lo despidieron, pero lo despidieron y ya trabaja en avenida... [Yo] ahora no he ido [a la avenida] porque es que les ayudo a mi hermana a hacer el quehacer, es que los sábados íbamos a cooperar o si no a vender tunas o si no chicles o paletas...

¹²⁹ Papá: Pos nosotros lo que queremos es que pues rinda bien, y que no, pos, que lograra algo de, de, si no logra una carrera, pos ya siquiera un trabajo más ligero que uno pues, pero ve que todos sus hermanos andan en la obra también...

Mamá: Es lo que le dicen los hermanos ‘no, tú échale ganas, tú estudia’, porque él dice ‘no pos yo también ya no voy a ir a la escuela, voy a trabajar’, ‘no qué trabajar, usted échele ganas a estudiar para que agarres un trabajo que no andes así trabajando como nosotros, para que agarres un trabajo bueno...’

Papá: Más, más este más liviano. Es lo que nosotros queremos pues, pero pos, le vamos a echar a ganas...

that's why she couldn't finish, she started high school. She says that if she had [studied in] university, she wouldn't be working in a house, and like that.¹³⁰

Totonaca, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

Angel: My mum works in a house and she does laundry and irons and all that, and my dad works as bricklayer.

Luzma: And what did they do back in Michoacan?

Angel: My mum didn't work; my dad did but he earned very little [...] that's why we came here...

[...]

Angel: [My cousins] work as bricklayers [with my dad]

[...]

Luzma: What do your parents say about your education? Why is it important to study?

Angel: So, so you have a better job when you grow up

Luzma: What type of job can you get if you study?

Angel: Lawyer¹³¹

Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old

Neither the parents' nor children's professional expectations are realistic in envisaging a real future (Reay et al., 2005). Ariagna, for instance, bases his professional aspirations on the figures created by the media. She wants to be a forensic archaeologist like a woman she has seen in a television series called *Bones*:

Ariagna: Because the one in *Bones*, she is like, mmm, that programme is okay, because there they work, investigate when the crime happened, like they discover the culprit, when they did it and that's it, and I watch it, but, since my room, I have the room where my aunt used to sleep, like it doesn't have a telly

¹³⁰ Luis Miguel: ...dicen que mi mama, que aquí terminó la prepa, la secundaria... porque la preparatoria, pus como no podía viajar... por eso no la pudo terminar, la comenzó la preparatoria y pus así. Dice que si ella tuviera universidad no estuviera trabajando en casa y pues así.

¹³¹ Angel: Mi mamá trabaja en casa y lava, plancha y todo eso y mi papá es albañil - Luzma: ¿Y allá [en Michoacan] qué hacían? - Angel: Mi mamá no trabajaba, mi papá sí pero ganaba muy poco [...] por eso nos vinimos para acá... - [...] - Angel: [Mis primos] trabajan de albañiles [con mi papá] - [...] - Luzma: ¿Qué te dicen tus papás de la educación? ¿Por qué es importante estudiar? - Angel: Pa, pa tener un mejor trabajo de grande - Luzma: ¿Cómo qué tipo de trabajo puede uno tener si estudia? - Angel: Licenciado, abogado

or radio, and I, listen from my room and I like it, or I watch the telly there in the room and at night I go running to the other room.¹³²

Mazahua, 4th grade, 10-years-old

When I asked the children to imagine where they will be in ten years' time, most of them imagined themselves like their mothers working in a house or like their fathers working in construction. Within a lack of economic capital, aspirations are hindered by financial constraints.

Lilia: My father never allows me [to work]. [He says] that I shouldn't because I am little, that I should keep studying... I've told him that [I could work] at least when I am on vacation but he doesn't allow me to... [They want me to have] a career but my father said that maybe they won't send my sister, the oldest one, to high school because they don't have [money]... she just started first grade [of secondary school] but she will start second grade, I am also starting [secondary school] too, they don't know how they are going to do...¹³³

Nahuatl girl, 6th grade, 11-year-old

Hugo: [My sister only wants to study] until high school because they spent a lot of money in secondary school; they don't want to image how much it'd be in high school.

Luzma: What did they pay for?

Hugo: For the physical education uniform, the one she has, besides, the one she has for the school [doesn't fit her because] it's too small, they bought her another one and the physical education uniform is only going to last this year

¹³² Ariagna: Porque la de Bones se me hace, mmm, esa película bien, porque ahí trabajan, investigan cuando sucedió el crimen, este cuando lo asesinaron, cuando hicieron así y ya, y todo lo veo, pero como ya mi cuarto, tengo el cuarto donde vivía mi tía, donde dormía, ese no tiene así tele ni radio, y me, del cuarto, escucho lo que dicen y me gusta, o si no veo la tele allá en el cuarto y ya de noche me voy corriendo pal otro cuarto.

¹³³ Lilia: Nunca me deja mi papá [trabajar]. [Me dice] que no, porque estoy chiquita, que debo seguir estudiando... le he dicho que nomás de vacaciones pero no me deja... [Quieren que haga] una carrera pero dice mi papá que a lo mejor a mi hermana la más grande no la meten a la prepa porque no tienen... apenas entró a primero [de secundaria] pero ya va a entrar a segundo y como yo voy a entrar también, ya no saben qué hacer...

and they have to buy her a new one because she said that the uniform is very small and she said that she is going to give it to me.¹³⁴

Purepecha boy, 5th grade, 10-year-old

It seems that parents give their children an important degree of freedom and flexibility to decide if they want to continue studying or not, as is shown in Juan's account:

Juan: My cousin is no longer going to school

Luzma: How old is your cousin?

Juan: She is fourteen

Luzma: Why isn't she going?

Juan: She was going to the same school as my [other] cousin, but she didn't want to, she was already in sixth grade and she didn't want to, and my cousin neither, they didn't want to go, my cousin is working now.¹³⁵

Purepecha, 3rd grade, 9-year-old

Monica wants to be a doctor. Her family encourages her to continue studying and find a 'career', so that she can work 'decorating wardrobes' like her cousins. Making wardrobes and other furniture is a traditional job among Purepecha people and, although Monica's family wants her to finish school to improve her life chances, they also encourage her to follow the family tradition. This shows the tension between the familial and school habitus, as Ingram and Abrahams argue, as being a 'multi-directional pull' on the habitus rather than a division, and a 'chameleon habitus' (Abrahams & Ingram, 2013), which helps us to think about the way the habitus can draw upon the internalisation of different structures to shift in accordance with the demands/expectations of different fields' (Ingram & Abrahams, 2016, pp. 144-145)

¹³⁴ Hugo: [Mi hermana nomás quiere estudiar] hasta la prepa que porque sí es un gasto mucho lo que hicieron en la secundaria, que no se va a imaginar lo que va ser en la preparatoria. - Luzma: ¿En qué gastaron? - Hugo: En el uniforme de educación física, el que tiene, aparte el que tiene de la escuela ya le queda bien chiquito, ya le compraron otro y el uniforme de educación física ya nomás le va a durar este año y ya le van a comprar otro el otro año porque dijo que ese uniforme ya lo tiene bien chiquito y dijo que ya me lo va a dejar a mi

¹³⁵ Juan: Mi prima ya no va a la escuela - Luzma: ¿Cuántos años tiene tu prima? - Juan: Ella tiene catorce - Luzma: ¿Por qué no va? - Juan: Es que ella iba en una donde va mi prima, pero no quiso, ya iba en sexto y no quiso y mi primo tampoco ya no quisieron y mi primo ya anda trabajando

Monica: My mum says that when I finish, when I choose a career she says, that I should get into, to make, how's it called? ... to decorate the ...to make wardrobes and decorate them.¹³⁶

Purepecha, 5th grade, 11-year-old

The family habitus is powerfully underpinned by a sense of continuity and collective belonging to what their family members do (Comboni & Lucas, 2012), as explained by Juan Carlos:

Juan Carlos: my mum says that I must be like all the family had been, carpenters and that almost all the family of my parents are carpenters except one who is a bricklayer.¹³⁷

Juan Carlos's mother also expressed her son's aspiration in the following quote:

Juan Carlos' mother: And Juan Carlos, well, I would mostly like, like I tell him 'Son, I will take you to my town so you marry a [woman] from there' – I say – because here, no, I don't like the ambience here, he says 'No, mum', he says, 'I will not try any drugs or anything, I will not drink', he says, 'when I grow up, I'll be an architect'. He says, 'by the time I grow up, I will pay for it so you so don't have to be working', he tells me, but he says that when he grows up he wants to be an architect.¹³⁸

Purepecha mother

Both the children and parents appeared hopeful about the life chances associated with having more education. Marcos expresses the desire of his family that he will study for more years than they did:

¹³⁶ Monica: Mi ma dice que cuando salga, cuando haga la carrera dice, que me meta a este, a hacer, ¿cómo se dice? A decorar los, hacer los roperos y a decorarlos.

¹³⁷ Juan Carlos: dice mi mamá que sea como toda la familia ha sido, carpintero y que casi toda la familia de mis papás son carpinteros menos uno que es albañil.

¹³⁸ Mamá de Juan Carlos: Y Juan Carlos pues yo qué más quisiera, le digo 'hijo, yo te voy a llevar a mi pueblo a que te cases con una de allá' – le digo – porque aquí no, aquí no me gusta este ambiente de aquí, dice 'no mamá', dice 'yo no te voy a probar ni droga ni nada, ni voy a tomar', dice. 'Yo cuando sea grande voy a ser arquitecto', dice, 'para cuando sea grande, te compro una casa, te compró y no andes trabajando', me dice, pero él dice que cuando él sea grande quiere ser arquitecto.

Marcos: Yes, they say that they don't want me to be like them, that they only studied until secondary school, so they want me to have a career [...] I don't want you to be like us where we didn't learn much and I want you to be more than us.¹³⁹

Purepecha, 6th grade

This creates a divided habitus, not a unified one. Luis wants to be a lawyer, although his parents are unsure about what this entails. In Mexico, the word 'licenciado' refers to lawyers but also to anybody holding a university degree, so it denotes a certain symbolic capital or 'status':

Luzma: And why is school so important to them?

Luis: So I learn more.

Luzma: So you learn more?

Luis: So when I grow up, I could be someone in life.

Luzma: What does it mean to be someone in life?

Luis: Like a doctor, like a graduate, like a lawyer, like an architect, like a policeman, like a soldier and that's it, I don't know...¹⁴⁰

I found habitus to a useful tool to analyse in relation to the identity formation processes of indigenous children in primary school settings as a set of dispositions that are constructed through childhood and through the socialisation experiences within the family. These children live with a divided habitus (Ingram, 2010), with a constant pulling in two directions, the institutional and the familial habitus. It is a problematic encounter of tensions and divisions in which children build their own sense of the world. They seek to make sense of the differences between social and familial fields and they form their personal, social and ethnic identity within the influence of the habitus and the capital they are starting to identify to later mobilise. In this way, as Reay (2010) argues, habitus is not a deterministic concept, it is rather a transforming concept; it

¹³⁹ Marcos: Sí me dicen que no quieren que sea como ellos, que nada más estudiaron hasta la secundaria, que quieren que haga mi carrera [...] no quiero que seas como nosotros que no aprendimos mucho, y quiero que seas más que nosotros.

¹⁴⁰ Luzma: ¿Por qué es tan importante para ellos la escuela?- Luis: Para que aprenda más.- Luzma: ¿Para que aprendas más? - Luis: Para que cuando sea grande sea alguien en la vida. - Luzma: ¿Cómo alguien en la vida?

Luis: Como doctor, como licenciado, como abogado, como arquitecto, como policía, como soldado y nomás, ya no sé...

integrates past and present as a set of layers that appear and reappear throughout personal and collective trajectories. It is a concept linked to personal histories with a strong element of temporality and emotionality.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has attempted to address a fundamental element of the process of identity formation, the representation of the self within the field of the school. These representations are inserted into specific sociocultural contexts and within particular discourses and power relationships. It sought to show the complexities of learner and social identities of indigenous children and how they are mediated by meritocratic and neoliberal ideologies. The chapter suggested several points for reflection on the dominant discourses that might influence how children perceive themselves and how their social contexts might be helping to reproduce or sometimes challenge these discourses.

The schools are reproducing social class inequalities by reinforcing stereotypes and contributing to forming an obedient, respectful and hard-working workforce, rather than critical and participatory multicultural citizens. For indigenous immigrant families, the school still represents a hope for social mobility, a hope that is in some sense, lacking realism, considering the institutional faults of the educational and economic system.

The following chapter will explore how teachers understand cultural diversity in order to understand how the institutional habitus works in some teachers' experiences in Mexican schools.

Chapter 7. Teachers' understandings of cultural diversity

Superiority? Inferiority?
Why not simply try to touch the other,
feel the other, discover each other?

Frantz Fanon (Black Skin, White Masks)

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 concluded that indigenous children are undergoing conflicting processes of identity formation within a double-bind habitus (Bourdieu, 1999) between their schooling experiences and the predispositions of their families. This chapter attempts to address the research question in terms of how teachers understand cultural diversity and the role they play in promoting or undermining indigenous children's identities. It is organised into four sections. Firstly, the teachers' approaches to recognising the cultural composition of their classrooms are analysed. Secondly, cultural diversity is explored by analysing the institutional habitus of the school and the discourses and *doxa* (Bourdieu, 1990) that influence teaching practices. Thirdly, the clash between the familial and the institutional habitus is discussed in order to analyse the positions that teachers and parents have in the field of the school. Finally, I present some evidence on the expectations that teachers have around indigenous children and how this is mediated through neoliberal discourses. These testimonies allow us to see the messiness and contradictions between teachers' practices and discourses in relation to children's schooling experiences.

7.2 Diversity awareness within the field of the urban school

As has been discussed in previous chapters, urban Mexican schools do not have mechanisms for identifying indigenous children (Barriga, 2008; Czarny & Martínez, 2013; Martínez - Casas, 2007; Martínez Buenabad, 2008). This exclusion has been part of the institutional habitus of the schools, where all children are considered, in theory, equal in terms of social and cultural status. Several studies have highlighted the relationship between levels of awareness and behaviour and attitudes towards ethnically

and socially diverse groups (Banks, 2001; Barnes, 2006; Brown, 2004; Gay, 2000).

Brown defines ‘cultural diversity awareness’ as:

[t]he continuous modification of one’s belief system by: (1) seeking out and internalising accurate knowledge of one’s own cultural frames-of-reference and the cultures of ‘others’, (2) recognising and respecting the contributions of ‘other’ (macro/micro) cultures to the progress of a society, (3) valuing, understanding, and participating in cross-cultural interactions, and (4) nurturing equitable behaviours in one’s ‘self’ and ‘others’ (Brown, 2004, p. 119).

The concept of cultural awareness and the conceptual tools of *habitus* and field are useful for analysing the recognition of ethnic minorities in schools and problematising the impact that the discourses of national identity have had, emanating as they do from a strong and mistakenly proud belief that ‘we are all equal’ (Levinson, 2001; Oehmichen, 2001). In order to determine the extent to which the teachers were aware of the diversity in their classrooms, they completed a brief questionnaire¹⁴¹ during the first few months of the fieldwork. They were asked to give the names of the students whom they thought might belong to one of the following groups:

1. Students with the most vulnerable social and economic conditions
2. Students with major adaptation problems within the classroom
3. Students originally from another state of the country
4. Students or families who belong to an indigenous group

The following tables show the number of students that the teachers identified in each school. The last column shows the number of self-identified indigenous children that emerged through the children’s questionnaire in an attempt to contrast the ‘actual’ number of indigenous children and the number identified by teachers:

¹⁴¹ See Chapter 2, the section on methods, for more details about this questionnaire answered by teachers from Years 3 to 6 in both schools.

Table 7.1 Number of students classified by teachers in terms of their social, cultural and economic characteristics (Simon Bolivar School)

	With the most unfavourable socioeconomic context	With adaptation problems	Who are immigrants	Who are indigenous	Children who self-identified as indigenous *
Teacher 1 st grade (female)	3	3	0	0	n.d.
Teacher 3 rd grade (female)	2	1	1	1	3
Teacher 3 rd grade (female)	5	2	2	0	2
Teacher 4 th grade (female)	5	5	1	1	1
Teacher 5 th grade (male)	3	5	2	1	1
Teacher 5 th grade (female)	5	5	3	3	3
Teacher 6 th grade (male)	4	2	2	0	5
Teacher 6 th grade (male)	All	None	1	0	1
Total	27	23	12	6	16

*These figures were taken from the questionnaire that the children completed at the beginning of the research, in which they were asked whether their mother or father spoke an indigenous language.

In the Simon Bolivar School (Table 7.1), teachers identified only two indigenous children out of the six children they mentioned they thought were indigenous (the actual number in the school was around 16 students). In the Violeta Parra School (Table 7.2), teachers identified five out of ten indigenous children. It was interesting to note that there were no names of indigenous children in any of the other categories of unfavourable socioeconomic conditions, adaptation problems or children who are immigrants.

Table 7.2 Numbers of students classified by the teachers in terms of their social, cultural and economic characteristics (Violeta Parra School)

	With the most unfavourable	With adaptation problems	Who are immigrants	Who are indigenous	Children who self-identified as indigenous *
Teacher 1 st grade (female)	3	2	5	1	1
Teacher 1 st grade (female)	3	3	3	1	1
Teacher 2 nd grade (female)	1	1	0	2	2
Teacher 3 rd grade (female)	1	1	1	1	1
Teacher 4 th grade (female)	1	5	5	0	3
Teacher 5 th grade (female)	3	2	0	0	1
Teacher 6 th grade (male)	3	2	0	0	1
Total	15	19	14	5	10

*These figures were taken from the questionnaire that the children filled out at the beginning of the research in which they were asked whether their mother or father spoke an indigenous language.

Most indigenous children did not appear in the teachers' questionnaires, supporting previous findings about the invisibility of indigenous children in urban classrooms (Martinez-Casas, Rojas, Bayona, Flores & Talavera, 2004; Martinez-Casas, 2007). This suggests that most indigenous children have adapted to the institutional habitus of the school so they are not visible for their ethnicity, class, origin or behavioural characteristics; they are perceived as being among the 'average' children, to the detriment of their own ethnic identity. The school, on the other hand, is unaware of its own cultural composition. The dispositions of the school, as will be discussed in the following section, reinforce a *doxa* of social and racial equality. *Doxa* in Bourdieu's words 'is the relationship of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for-granted of the world that flows from practical sense' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 68).

7.3 Institutional habitus: meritocracy and equality

The theory of practice of Bourdieu tries overall to demonstrate the fallacy of a meritocratic education system that defends the belief that children from disadvantaged backgrounds do not succeed because of their own merits; for Bourdieu, this is the product of the system design (Grenfell & James, 1998; Thomson, 2017).

The field of educational policies has created an institutional habitus shared by most urban schools where, in an aspiration for equity, all students are considered the same (Levinson, 2001). In this way, the ideology of *mestizaje* is (re)produced and it takes the form of ethnic blindness, the neglect of differences, as shown in the following extracts where I asked teachers whether they had cultural diversity in their classrooms:

Mr Efrain: I don't, personally I don't notice [diversity], they are kids that, in general terms, like, culturally speaking, *they are equal*, like also in socioeconomic matters, *they are the same*, I mean, no, there are no differences.¹⁴²

Mr Felipe: The greater part of the group, their economic standard *is the same*. The families of these communities are of humble extraction (sorry that I cannot provide you with one [name] but they are all of them).¹⁴³ (*Comment from the teachers' questionnaire*)

Mrs Lidia: [...] Since *we all are equal* and have the same opportunities, they also have the same opportunities everybody has of getting ahead. And they are very committed children; they are very noble kids.¹⁴⁴

This finding that 'all students are equal' as evidence of the denial of inequalities reflects what has also been found in research conducted in other countries. Allard and Santoro conducted a research study with student teachers and found:

This explanation that 'students are all the same' is often deployed by student teachers and seems to be used to negate difference, and/or manage the fear that difference sometimes evokes. It also allows them to position themselves within a key Australian discourse, that of egalitarianism. By insisting that any difference doesn't *really* matter, they are able to avoid confronting the challenges of

¹⁴² Mtro. Efrain: No yo, yo en lo personal no noto [diversidad], son niños que, que en términos generales, este, culturalmente hablando, pues son iguales, este en cuestiones socioeconómicas también igual o sea no, no hay diferencias.

¹⁴³ Mtro. Felipe: La mayor parte del grupo su estándar económico por igual. Las familias de estas comunidades son de extracción humilde (disculpe que no le proporcione a uno sino a todos).

¹⁴⁴ Mtra. Lidia: [...] Al momento de que todos somos iguales y tenemos las mismas oportunidades, ellos también tienen la oportunidad al igual que todos de salir adelante. Y son niños muy comprometidos, son niños muy nobles.

teaching for difference, and of acknowledging that some differences *do* matter.
(Allard & Santoro, 2006, p. 123)

The field of the urban school in Mexico is embedded within a habitus of meritocracy and *mestizaje* ideologies, where social and ethnic differences seem to be erased. For Mr Efrain, cultural and socioeconomic attributes seem to be synonymous. Being equal, as Mrs Lidia argued, is the notion that all children have the same expectations and opportunities regardless of their ethnic origin. This is another result of a meritocratic *doxa*: children are considered equal and they must take advantage of the benefits of the schooling in equal circumstances. Institutional habitus is the product of the conscious erasing of ethnic differences within the educational policies once implemented through the *mestizaje* ideology. As Bourdieu argues, '[i]t is, of course, never ruled out that the responses of the *habitus* may be accompanied by a strategic calculation tending to perform in a conscious mode the operation that the habitus performs quite differently, namely an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53). The teachers' perceptions are rooted in two ideas that are deeply embedded in the Mexican society as a whole. First, there is an embedded idea that indigenous groups are disappearing and the ones that exist live in rural areas (Martínez C. et al., 2004). Second, there is an idealistic perception of indigenous children as being obedient and committed, as was discussed in the last chapter. The children themselves have this perception. They try to perform their learner identities as hardworking and respectable in order to align themselves with the institutional habitus of the school.

The educational system is designed to make indigenous children invisible in urban schools. A principal of the Simon Bolivar School asserted that there were no mechanisms for detecting the presence of indigenous children in the school other than through birth certificates and inferred that the children's communities of origin were mainly indigenous; however, he made reference again to the idea of *mestizaje* when these groups migrate to the cities:

Luzma: Have you heard from other teachers or have you come to know from the parents about the indigenous population's presence in the classrooms?

Mr Joel: Umm no, well in the pre-registration there are two birth certificates from children, you know, from Michoacan, and I know that this region is known here as Santa Ana de los Negros, over there San Juan Tepatitlan and so on, and that, well, there are, well, indigenous communities, right? I think that all the racial mixing comes to this zone and becomes predominant, right? I don't have all the knowledge; I don't have the elements to say if it belongs to that group, right?¹⁴⁵

As in the case of Mr Joel, I found many teachers in my interviews that did not know much about the indigenous groups in the country. This is also a consequence of the education they received themselves. This is how the institutional habitus gets embodied within the teachers and it is then reproduced when different positions are taken within the field, as students and, later on, as teachers. Ignorance of the cultural diversity and the effects of the colonisation process has become part of the institutional habitus of the schools, as it was once designed as a doxa within educational policies. This is how fields share commonalities. As Bourdieu suggests, the 'field of power is geared to support the (re)production of national/global economic and social regimes' (Thomson, 2017, pp., Pos. 465). It is only by looking at the practices within the field of the school that is possible to see 'the dialectic of the *opus operatum* and the *modus operandi*; of the objectified products and the incorporated products of historical practice; of structures and *habitus*' (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 52).

7.4 Conceptions of cultural diversity

In practice, both ethnicity and class overlap in teachers' conceptions of cultural diversity and contribute to the misrecognition of indigenous children. When I asked the teachers about their experiences in 'culturally diverse' classrooms, they described issues related to the social and economic characteristics of their students, rather than the

¹⁴⁵ Luzma: Maestro, ¿y usted ha escuchado por parte de los maestros o usted mismo se ha dado cuenta por los padres de familia de la presencia de población indígena en los salones de clase?

Mtro. Joel: Mm no, este en la preinscripción vienen dos actas por ahí de niños este, de Michoacán, y sé que esta región de aquí se le conoce como Santa Ana de los Negros, o acá de San Juan Tepatitlán y todo eso y que este, que hay pueblos este, indígenas, ¿verdad? Yo creo que llega todo lo del mestizaje a una plaza y predomina aquí este ¿verdad?, desconozco esa parte, no tengo elementos para decir si le pertenece a este grupo, ¿verdad?

presence of indigenous children in their classrooms. The teachers' definitions of cultural diversity were indeed diverse. Some teachers related the concept to socioeconomic status, others to learning style, and yet others to disabilities, all aspects of diversity, but not necessarily related to the ethnicity of the children.

In my first conversation with the teachers, none of them raised ethnicity as an aspect of difference in their classrooms. Another way in which the teachers conceived diversity was in terms of learning style and evaluation strategies. Differentiated education is not yet a common practice among Mexican teachers, and since they have groups of 40 to 45 students per class, responding to the diversity of their educational needs according to different learning styles is a daily challenge:

Teacher Carmelita: [...] the diversity involves more work for ourselves because when you [transmit] the knowledge and if the child didn't get that knowledge, well, you say, well, [the knowledge has been gotten by] the majority and you let it go [...] that diversity you speak of, in order to obtain the diversity you have to analyse, and, [...] evaluate, yes, evaluate to know what you want and who did get the knowledge [...], and as you consider the circumstances, then you form another, another strategy...¹⁴⁶

Another interesting approach of the teachers' understanding of cultural diversity seems to be related not only to the mechanisms of participation within the classroom, but also to the level of interest and motivation of the students. In addition, the idea of 'mixing' the ability differences within the classrooms seems to be one of the practices that teachers perceive to be the consequence of recognising diversity, related more to the engagement with the curriculum:

Mr Felipe: Well, we try to associate everything when there is cultural diversity in a classroom or anywhere else, everything has to be included to see whether this diversity exists among, among the students so we can **mix** them, so they can have a

¹⁴⁶ Mtra. Carmelita: Mira este, la diversidad implica más trabajo para uno porque cuando tú das los conocimientos en general y si el niño que no comprendió este, dices bueno para la mayoría y lo dejas pasar... pues entonces no estás aplicando ese ambiente, esa diversidad de la que tú me hablas, para que se dé la diversidad tienes que ver y, y, y, este, cómo se dice, evaluar, evaluar para saber qué quieres y quiénes sí lo comprendieron y entonces retomas el conocimiento de otra manera, haces otro equipo con el que sí sabe, con lo que tú consideras formas otra, otra estrategia...

better contribution for each of them. At the moment, we have this diversity here with the children in the cultural part because there are some [students] who are interested in studying, others not; that's immediately evident.¹⁴⁷

Mr Felipe does not seem to have a clear idea about what cultural differences he has in his classroom. He seems to understand cultural diversity in terms of the children's interest in studying and his strategy focuses on mixing the students so they can learn from one another. Children's aspects of difference such as ethnicity and class are absent from his discourse.

Denial of the presence of indigenous children in urban school is also shown in practices of distrust and doubt. In her research with Otomi groups, Martínez Casas (2007) found a feeling of distrust among the school authorities towards indigenous groups. In the school she visited, the school principal suggested that she should confirm whether those children she wanted to interview for her research were indeed indigenous because they were 'very likely to lie'. It is interesting to see that the first reaction of many principals and teachers to a project concerning indigenous children in schools is one of distrust and suspicion, denoting ethnic blindness. There seems to be a recognition of a clash between the institutional habitus of the school and the habitus of indigenous children, where there seems to be relationships of power. Teachers and school authorities tend to justify themselves, arguing that they do not have 'the elements' to recognise indigenous children within their school contexts so they, unconsciously or not, choose to ignore those minority groups, thus exercising the power of the *mestizo* majority as an unconscious neo-colonising strategy (Cusicanqui, 2014). On the other hand, indigenous children prefer to keep their ethnic identities invisible in the field of the school in order to maintain themselves safe from discrimination.

Indigenous children's ethnic identities are marginalised within a colonial discourse that works to deny their presence (Oehmichen, 2005) in the urban settings by arguing that they are no longer indigenous once they have moved to the cities:

¹⁴⁷ Mtro. Felipe: Pues tratamos de cuando existe una diversidad cultural en un grupo de clases o en cualquier parte se tiene que asociar todo, se tiene que englobar todo e ir viendo si esa diversidad existe entre, entre los alumnos para poderlos este, pues mezclar para que tengan mejor aportación en cada uno de ellos. En el momento tenemos esa diversidad aquí de los niños, en la parte cultural, porque hay unos que se interesan en el estudio, otros no, entonces se ve inmediatamente.

Mr Efrain: No, they are no longer [indigenous]. Maybe their parents and their grandparents are, but they are no longer; that is not very common around here.¹⁴⁸

As Martinez Casas et al. (2004) argue, the teaching profession in Mexico has traditionally adopted the role of ‘civilising’ the other, which explains why, in the teachers’ imagery, some children ‘are no longer indigenous’ unless they attend indigenous schools. In Mr Efrain’s classroom, at least five children identified themselves as indigenous at the beginning of the fieldwork. One might think that November was too early for the teachers to know the background of all their students; however, Mr Efrain had taught the same group the year before. It seems that it was more a matter of a lack of awareness about the cultural characteristics of his students than deliberate indifference; however, whether intentionally or not, this attitude still contributes to the circle of exclusion. Interestingly, after seven months of fieldwork, I interviewed Mr Efrain for a second time, and we discussed this topic again:

Luzma: How do you identify whether a student has a different ethnic origin? Have you had students with a different ethnic origin?¹⁴⁹

Mr Efrain: Eh, I do have, currently, I have in the sixth grade a girl whose name is Mirian and comes from Puebla. When she arrived here for the second grade, she did not manage Spanish very well. She used to speak Spanish with difficulty, so, like, like, specifically, I don’t know what group she comes from, but yes, and some others come from Michoacan. We have noticed as well, but it’s the same. I mean, it’s not a rule because I have a girl whose origin is from Michoacan and she is very, very studious, very dedicated. Her parents have no education, and she makes an effort to submit all her work and everything is fine; that’s Acumaryn.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Maestro Efraín: Ellos ya no, tal vez sus papás y sus abuelos sí, pero ellos ya no, eso casi ya no se ve aquí

¹⁴⁹ Luzma: ¿Cómo identifica si un alumno tiene un origen étnico diferente? ¿Ha tenido alumnos con un origen étnico distinto?

¹⁵⁰ Mr. Efraín: Eh, sí tengo, tengo ahorita en sexto a una niña que se llama Mirian y viene de Puebla, este, ella cuando llegó, llegó aquí a segundo, este no manejaba muy bien el, el español, este, hablaba, este con dificultad el español, entonces, así, así específicamente no sé de qué, de qué grupo venía, pero este, pero sí, y algunos otros que vienen de Michoacán también lo, lo hemos detectado, entonces pero igual, o sea no es, no es regla, porque tengo una niña que sí tiene orígenes de aquí de Michoacán y este es muy, muy estudiosa, muy dedicada, sus papás no tienen la preparación, y este y ella hace un esfuerzo por presentar todos sus trabajos y todo bien, y es Acumaryn

Mr Efrain identified at least two girls in his class with different ethnic backgrounds; however, even though he knew that they were originally from other states, he was unable to name the indigenous groups to which they might belong to, or even use the term ‘indigenous’ to refer to them. Mrs Esperanza also stated that she had students from Michoacan and that two or three of them might be indigenous.¹⁵¹ However, she did not name the ethnic group either. There were cases where teachers confused children who were not very talkative or had language problems with being indigenous (Mirian, Marcelo, Alejandro). Mrs Esperanza stated that she was able to identify the ethnicity of her students because she notices ‘their accent, their way of doing things’.¹⁵² She thought that Alejandro was an indigenous boy, and she was very concerned about his academic performance. However, when I interviewed Alejandro, I realised that he was not indigenous: he had a Nahuatl stepfather from Hidalgo. Both Alejandro and Mirian participated in my research as part of the *mestizo* group. When I asked Mirian whether any of her family members spoke Nahuatl, she said that many people assumed she was indigenous because of the colour of her skin. She seemed tired of people’s assumptions about her ethnicity and even said in an ironic tone: ‘As if they were very whitish’.¹⁵³

Skin colour and language are the elements that notably mark out ethnic differences in the field of the school. Both elements seem to be also the characteristics that the teachers perceive more rapidly in relation to ethnicity. Miss Roxana, for instance, based Diego and Alejandra’s ethnicity on the darker skin colour of their siblings whom she had met in previous years:

Miss Roxana: Well, two [children] who are indigenous already come. One is Diego, the one that [you] took out [of the class]; his mother is from Michoacan, from the indigenous group from there, and Alejandra, but they are kids that have the more dedicated parents. They always attend, they come every day, very clean and are always in the ‘honour roll’. Their parents speak both dialects; that is why I used to tell the kids: ‘You should learn it, learn it’; ‘Oh, no’, they say, they only know two or three little words, but they are so shy. They are unaware, but they were born of indigenous parents.

¹⁵¹ Mtra. Esperanza: Tengo muchos de Michoacán, tengo dos o tres que, para mí son indígenas

¹⁵² Mtra. Esperanza: Lo noto en su acento, lo noto en su modo de actuar

¹⁵³ Mirian: Ni que ellos estuvieran tan blanquitos

Luzma: And how did you find out about this? Did their parents openly mention it?

Miss Roxana: Well, strangely enough, I first met both of them five years ago, when I arrived here. I taught their brothers and the same thing happened. One was a boy [brother] of Diego and the other a girl [sister] of Alejandra, but they were just a little bit brown, and I used to say to their mothers – their mothers are the ones that always come to the meetings, I still do not know their fathers – ‘Excuse me Ma’am, you are not from here, are you?’, ‘No, we are from Michoacan’, and it was like that when I started talking to them, and they are from there, from there and they speak their dialect among themselves. They are like the ones who are in the markets and street markets, and they speak Purepecha, I think.¹⁵⁴

Miss Roxana was aware of the importance of the children learning their parents’ language, unlike most of the teachers in the Simon Bolivar School. Marcos (Year 6) and Luis Miguel (Year 3) were both Totonaca, and were held in high esteem by their teachers. It is the general opinion in the school that the boys were among the few students in the school who were doing well academically due to the attention paid to them by their parents. However, they were never identified as indigenous children:

Miss Esperanza: Luis Miguel is a very good student, very good student [...] Marcos, very cute, very good, [they are both] very good students and a very good family, it’s the family who is interested and every now and then they ask

¹⁵⁴ Mtra. Roxana: Pues vienen dos [niños] que son indígenas, que es Diego, el que [ud.] saca, su mamá es de Michoacán, de los indígenas de allá, y Alejandra, pero son niños que sus papás son de los más dedicados con ellos, esos no me faltan nunca, diario vienen muy bien aseados y están en los cuadros de honor, sus papás hablan dialecto de los dos, cosa que yo les digo: “Ustedes apréndanlo, apréndanlo”, “ay, no”, que saben dos o tres palabritas, yo les digo: “escuchen a sus papás, para que nos enseñen eso”, pero les da pena, no lo saben, pero ellos dos vienen de papás indígenas.

Luzma: ¿Y cómo se enteró usted de eso? ¿Los papás le dijeron abiertamente?

Mtra. Roxana: Yo, de ellos dos curiosamente tuve la primera vez hace cinco años, cuando llegué aquí, tuve a sus hermanos y fue lo mismo, un hombre de Diego y una mujer de Alejandra, pero como eran morenitos así, y yo les decía a sus mamás, sus mamás son las que vienen a las juntas, a sus papás no los conozco, “señora, ¿usted no es de aquí, verdad?”, “no, somos de Michoacán”, y así fue como yo empecé a platicar con ellas y son de allá, de allá y ellas hablan su dialecto entre ellas, son como las que están en los mercados, en los tianguis, hablan el Purepecha, me parece.

[about their progress] and they are among the few that we have, that as I told you, and that [they] are well... ¹⁵⁵

Miss Esperanza did not identify Marcos and Luis Miguel as indigenous, as if being indigenous and a good learner were intrinsically incompatible. The misrecognition of these two children becomes part of the circle of symbolic violence and discrimination that indigenous children face in urban schools (Thomson, 2017). Although it is necessary to highlight the misrecognition of indigenous children by their teachers, it is also fair to admit that it is difficult to expect teachers to have higher degrees of agency within an educational system with structures and policies that are implicitly racist. Teachers' misrecognition and neglect is also the product of the discrimination and racism against indigenous cultures in the country as a whole. Among the teachers, there are different levels of knowledge and awareness about the indigenous cultures in the country, but there is a significant lack of information about the current phenomena of indigenous migration to the cities. Miss Lidia stated that she has had indigenous children in the school, but that they are a population in constant movement who do not stay in the school for long:

Miss Lidia: Oh, well, umm, look, I can tell you that it is a floating population, isn't it? I mean, children come from other cities, children that stay here for a while and they leave later. As, as I see it, it's like they are using the school as a way or means, I mean, they are here just passing through, they just finish and take another way. So, in total, in my group, you know that there is only one per cent of the children that I've had, *who are really native*, but [the next generations]¹⁵⁶, are the 15 per cent, I mean between the 10 and 15 per cent.

Miss Lidia seems to consider indigenous peoples as '*really native*', those who live in indigenous communities and speak an indigenous language, and she thinks that only one per cent of them migrate to the city. The following generations, those who are born

¹⁵⁵ Mtra. Esperanza: Luis Miguel es muy buen alumno, mucho muy buen alumno [...] Marcos, muy lindo, muy bueno, muy buenos alumnos y muy buena familia, es la familia que se interesa y que cada rato está preguntando y que, es de los pocos que le digo que tenemos bien...

¹⁵⁶ By those who "come just behind them", Teacher Lidia was referring to the second generation of immigrants who were born in the city.

in the cities, are not considered as native as their parents, and she thinks these are about 10 or 15 per cent indigenous.

Luzma: And how do you notice this? Do you notice any differences from the other children?

Miss Lidia: I do notice some differences, for instance, in the way they behave, the way they dress, the way they conduct themselves, their language and habits; that is when we notice it.

Luzma: And how do they do at the school compared with those who are not indigenous?

Miss Lidia: I think that it is very rewarding to work with them because we learn from their roots, we learn from their roots, and it is useful to us, well, to have an idea of the diversity of the population, the diversity of cultures that we have here in our state and in our nation. That's what I think, that it is very rewarding for both them and us.¹⁵⁷

Teacher Lidia's discourse is influenced by the romantic idea of mutual learning between indigenous and mestizo populations that has been articulated well, but with no real consequences in terms of cultural recognition in school practices. The understanding of who is indigenous and who is not is embedded within a colonial discourse of '*mestizaje*' and assimilation that tries to dissolve cultural differences and veil the reality of political and institutional racism (Castellanos, 2004).

Principal Fabiola, one of the principals of the Simon Bolivar School, analysed the migration phenomenon of indigenous populations to the cities within a social context of poverty and lack of opportunity. However, Castellanos' (2004) argument about the

¹⁵⁷ Mtra. Lidia: Ay pues este mira, te puedo decir que son, es una población flotante, ¿verdad? O sea, niños que vienen de otros estados, niños que un ratito están aquí y luego se van. Como, como yo la veo es como una escuela trampolín, o sea que nomás están de paso, nomás salen y me voy para otro lado.

Entonces en sí, en mi grupo, pos yo casi como el 1 por ciento de los niños que he tenido, esos son nativos, nativos, pero a los que vienen atrasito como un 15 por ciento, de un 10 a un 15 por ciento.

Luzma: ¿Y en qué nota? ¿Nota alguna diferencia con el resto de los niños?

Mtra. Lidia: Sí noto algunas diferencias, por ejemplo, en su forma de actuar, en su forma de vestir, en su forma de dirigirse, en su lenguaje y en sus costumbres es cuando nos damos cuenta.

Luzma: ¿Y cómo les va en la escuela en comparación con los que no son indígenas?

Mtra. Lidia: Yo pienso que es mucho muy rico trabajar con ellos porque aprendemos de sus raíces, aprendemos de sus raíces y nos sirve, pues como para saber más o menos cómo está la diversidad de población, la diversidad de culturas que tenemos aquí en nuestro estado y en nuestra nación. Eso yo creo que es muy rico tanto para ellos como para nosotros.

mestizo idea that indigenous groups ‘arrive and invade the cities’ is still present in Principal Fabiola’s view:

Principal Fabiola: Ok, well, since I arrived, I simply saw that, well, in other words, that cultural diversity, because almost everybody is at the same level socioeconomically speaking, but culturally it does exist because some persons that come from, well, the field, have settled there, in most part from a certain ethnic group, who have found it easy to locate themselves here because it is, it was an area where just with the fact of settling there, they had the right to stay, and then the land that they acquired was very cheap and the others that just settled there with the purpose of possessing the land, they thought it was easy to be there with easy access, because of, well, the economic issue.

As shown in Principal Fabiola’s quote, another way in which teachers often misrecognised indigenous children in the school is by assuming that there are no socioeconomic differences among all the children. They are all poor and there is no distinction in terms of their ethnicities. Indigenous populations in urban settings however, are, on average, poorer than the rest of the working class population in the cities (INEGI, 2015).

While principal Fabiola knows about the indigenous immigration phenomenon and the states that indigenous peoples might be coming from, she was unable to identify the indigenous students in her school:

Luzma: Which indigenous cultures do you see?

Principal Fabiola: Well, they come from Michoacan, Oaxaca, and from the poor states that don’t have permanent jobs in their community, land workers that come to be part of the poverty belts just to get a waged job, or sell self-made products in the street markets, selling in their baskets products like fried potatoes, gum, or any other product they can sell.

Luzma: Have any of this type of parents or students approached you and openly said that they belonged to any ethnic group?

Principal Fabiola: No, but because they speak, the way they talk, and because of the way they sometimes spoke in not very good Spanish, the way they speak it and among them they used to speak their dialect.

Luzma: So, between the parents and the kids too?

Principal Fabiola: The kids are ashamed to speak their dialect, but they did speak it with their parents, but not, in front of the teacher they speak Spanish, and they speak it more or less like us.

Luzma: Really? And why do you think this happens? Why are there some children that suddenly are ashamed to speak their dialect at the school?

Principal Fabiola: Because they don't know their roots, they don't, well, know how rich it would be for our culture that they, well, taught us their dialect and we taught them to speak Spanish.¹⁵⁸

As in Miss Lidia's quote, Principal Fabiola also used the idealised discourse of mutual learning between indigenous and mestizo population. However, there is a contradiction in her discourse in that even though she says she values indigenous cultures and its richness, she has not approached any indigenous children or their parents to find out more about their ethnicities. The recognition of cultural differences seems to be rooted in prejudice against children's ethnicities, in the form of their accent and their way of speaking. A sense of caution among both the children and teachers was observed with

¹⁵⁸ Mtra. Fabiola: Bueno pues desde que llegué prácticamente vi esa, más bien esa diversidad, este, cultural, porque socioeconómica casi todos son del mismo nivel, pero cultural sí porque ahí han llegado a asentarse personas que vienen este, del campo, sobre todo de algún grupo étnico, que se les ha facilitado ubicarse aquí porque es un, era una zona en el cual por el solo hecho de asentarse ahí, tenían derecho a su permanencia, entonces los terrenos que adquirieron fueron muy baratos y los que nada más porque se asentaron ahí por posesión de la tierra, entonces pues a ellos se les hizo fácil estar ahí con fácil acceso, por este, lo económico.

Luzma: ¿Qué culturas indígenas ve, maestra?

Mtra. Fabiola: Pues vienen de Michoacán, vienen de Oaxaca, vienen de los Estados pobres que no tienen un trabajo fijo en su comunidad, trabajadores del campo y que vienen a formar cinturones de miseria por un trabajo asalariado, o vendiendo productos en tianguis que hacen ellos mismos, vendiendo en sus canastas algún producto, papitas, chicles, cualquier producto que ellos puedan

Luzma: ¿Se llegaron a acercar este tipo de papás o los alumnos con usted y decir abiertamente que ellos pertenecían a algún grupo étnico?

Mtra. Fabiola: No, pero porque hablan, por su forma de hablar, por su forma de hablar que en ocasiones sí hablaban español mocho, como ellos lo hablan y entre ellos hablaban su dialecto.

Luzma: Ah, entre los papás, ¿y los niños también?

Mtra. Fabiola: A los niños les da vergüenza hablar su dialecto, pero con sus papás sí hablaban el dialecto pero ya frente al maestro, hablaban el español, y ellos más o menos lo hablan como nosotros.

Luzma: ¿Sí?, ¿y por qué cree que pase esto? ¿Por qué hay algunos niños que de repente sienten que les da pena en la escuela hablar su dialecto?

Mtra. Fabiola: Porque no conocen sus raíces, no saben este, lo rico que debería ser para nuestra cultura que ellos este, nos enseñaran su dialecto y nosotros les enseñáramos a hablar español.

regard to talking openly about the children's ethnic origin (Allard & Santoro, 2006). Like Principal Fabiola, most teachers agreed that it is the family's responsibility to ensure that the child values her/his roots and does not feel ashamed or embarrassed to openly talk about his/her ethnicity:

Miss Lidia: I think it is the family itself, because if the child doesn't feel uncomfortable with what he's doing, he will see it that way. This morning [in my other school], a boy arrived and he spoke [his language] and [the children] learnt a lot from him, and he didn't freeze or anything, I mean, he was so spontaneous and so proud and we also were so proud of him. All of his classmates, all of the teachers wanted to learn from him. We even discussed language matters and he spoke to us in his own language perfectly. Therefore, I think that maybe it's just a matter of the parents, that maybe they could be saying: 'Don't speak, don't tell'; then the load is very heavy for them: '[my mother] said not to speak, when the teacher is asking me to express myself, but I have to do what my mother tells me.' I think it's a matter for the family, not for the school.¹⁵⁹

The social capital of the mothers is not valued within the field of the school. There is a dissonance between indigenous habitus and the mainstream habitus of schools. As has been researched in other projects within working-class students '[m]others' personal histories and their educational experiences influence their involvement in their children's schooling, particularly their effectiveness in dealing with teachers and such differences are powerfully rooted in cultural capital' (Reay, 2004a, p. 77). Ethnicity makes this situation more complex, since 'minority ethnic parents [...] display frustration and anger about their inability to meet the schools' demands, [and] they are dismissed as difficult and unhelpful' (ibid, p. 79).

¹⁵⁹ Yo pienso que es la misma familia porque es si un niño no se siente mal con lo que está haciendo, se lo plantea de esa forma. En la mañana llegó un niño y él hablaba y ellos aprendieron mucho de él, pero no se bloqueaba ni nada, o sea era muy espontáneo y estaba orgulloso y nos sentíamos orgullosos de él. Todos los compañeritos, todos los maestros querían aprender de él. Incluso hicimos una dinámica y planteamos la lengua y él nos hablaba en su lengua perfectamente. Entonces yo creo que a lo mejor es cuestión de los padres de familia que a lo mejor pueden decir: "No hables o no digas", entonces es la carga muy fuerte para ellos, "me dijo que no hablara y el maestro diciendo que por qué no lo expresas, entonces yo le hago caso a mi mamá". Yo creo que es cuestión de familia, no es cuestión de la escuela.

7.5 Familial and institutional habitus

The separation between school and family is remarkable in most of the teachers' and principals' discourses. There is a tendency for the school staff to blame families for the invisibility and weakening of the children's ethnic identities; but there is no recognition of the roots of the parent's anxieties and fears that lead them to discourage the use of indigenous language at schools. It is difficult for teachers to see this phenomenon as part of a broader system in which the school is also included as a powerful tool for promoting or limiting ethnic diversity. As Bourdieu asserts, the relationship between teachers and parents is

[I]ocked in a meritocratic vision that is ill prepared to perceive or deal with a diversity of student intellectual traumas: negative judgments affecting self-image find reinforcement in the parents, in ways that no doubt vary in their force and form, magnifying suffering and confronting the child or teenager with the alternatives of either conforming or quitting the game through denial, compensation, or regression. (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 509)

This is part of the institutional habitus of the school; as explained by Ingram, the school's habitus, like an individual's habitus, 'is the product of historical, social and cultural actions and interactions. As a child's individual habitus is mediated through the institution, the institutional habitus restructures the child's habitus' (Ingram, 2010, p. 424). Teacher Lidia explains in the following quote her efforts to support the use of indigenous language within the classroom, even though her indigenous students seems to feel uncomfortable about it.

Miss Lidia: I, for example, I was like: 'Let's see, son; let's work it out', but he doesn't agree too much, he doesn't and we all, well, gave him a big round of applause and all, and the children wanted to know but no, no and no. I mean, as I see it, it could be the family appraisal to preserve the culture they have, because I have seen also, a lot of people who are not ashamed at all; they get used to us. And that is in the culture that one has in the family, right? It's much easier that they come and 'Teacher, look at that...' Perfect! There are children who don't want to do it until you find out and you realize.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Mtra. Lidia: Yo por ejemplo, estaba: "a ver hijo, vamos viendo", pero no acepta mucho, no acepta mucho, y todos pues le aplaudimos y todo, y los niños quieren saber pero no y no y no. O sea como que yo pienso que es la revaloración misma de su familia por rescatar esa cultura que tienen, porque yo he

According to Teacher Lidia, children ‘don’t want to’ share their ethnicity within the classroom, and therefore, she considers that the teacher has to ‘find out and realise it’ by her/himself. It is interesting to note that the responsibility and initiative is expected to come from the children. It is not the teacher who is the one who must know her/his students’ socio-cultural backgrounds. There is no acknowledgment of the power dynamics and discrimination embedded in the children’s and their families’ experiences that are undermining their reluctance to share their ethnicity openly and proudly. This seems to be a defence mechanism that is similar to what Reay and Lucey found in their research with working class families in the UK. ‘Keeping to your yourself’ is a strategy for ‘keeping others out, and the exclusionary aspects of such strategies in terms of race and ethnicity are evident’ (Reay & Lucey, 2000, p. 419). Miss Lidia also considers that the indigenous peoples should ‘get used’ to the *mestizo* group without feeling shame, insisting in a one-sided effort to get ‘adapted’ to the *mestizo* groups. As Mr Fabian explains in the following quote, the school does not seem to be the ‘right place’ for indigenous children to keep their identities because of the ‘natural shyness’ they have:

Mr Fabian: [The identity] is being lost, dear, firstly because it isn’t the right place for them to keep it, on the one side; another thing, it is very hard for them to get along, to get along with everybody else precisely because of the natural shyness they bring.

Luzma: Are they shyer than the rest?

Mr Fabian: Yes, they are shyer, but they are freer in a lot of respects, they are freer in their way of thinking and their belief is very strong and solid, but they have no continuity, because the place is inappropriate, only if they were in the south...but there is too little here to reinforce that identity, I mean to reinforce it and maintain it; there isn’t at all.

Once again, the idea that indigenous peoples should live in the rural south of the country is prevalent, highlighting how ‘place and identity are powerfully connected but often in ways which involve active processes of exclusion’ (Reay & Lucey, 2000, p. 410), as seen in Mr Fabian’s quote, which also shows a narrow understanding of ethnic

visto también mucha gente que para nada que le da pena, se acostumbran a nosotros. Y eso es ya en la cultura que se tiene de familia, ¿sí? Es mucho más fácil que ellos vengan y “fíjese maestra que...” ¡perfecto! Hay niños que no quieren hacerlo hasta que tú indagas y te das cuenta.

identities. The social fields of the city, the school and the educational system do not become accountable for acknowledging the needs of indigenous children because the 'place is inappropriate'. There is a strong denial of the responsibility of the school to reinforce the ethnic identities of indigenous children and even though some teachers have ideas about what might be done, they do not seem to do anything about it:

Luzma: In your opinion, how could the school help with this?

Mr. Fabian: Well, developing workshops, making them understand the historic force that an ethnic group has in any part of the Mexican Republic. Workshops are not taking place; if we analyse it, [we see] history in a very superficial way, well, it's very little that it offers, we need to go deeper, to make them understand, you see, well, why, well, the need to have here an exact knowledge of any natural ethnic group, since it's very little. The fifth grade text book, apart from the history text book, is full of waste and few activities and little historical knowledge; there is no reinforcement that you could say, here I have a library which has stories, legends, and narrations; it has, it does have [themes] from the indigenous people, but we would like more. I, at least, have come to the conclusion that most of the teachers of my generation, according to the historic transformation that is taking place right now, don't know anything, because with all 'the new', what we saw then was a big historic lie and 'the new' is the truth...¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Mtro. Fabián: Se está perdiendo [la identidad] hija, primeramente porque no es el lugar adecuado para ellos para poder conservar uno, otra, que les cuesta mucho trabajo hacer el rol, que hagan el rol con los demás precisamente por la timidez natural que traen. - Luzma: ¿Son más tímidos que el resto?

Mtro. Fabián: Sí, son más tímidos, pero son más libres en muchos aspectos, son más libres en su forma de pensar y su creencia es muy firme y muy sólida, pero no tienen continuidad, porque el lugar no es apropiado, estuvieran en el sur... pero aquí hay muy poco donde reforzar esa identidad, más bien reafirmarla y sostenerla, no hay. - Luzma: ¿Cuál sería para usted la manera en que la escuela podría ayudar en esto?

Mtro. Fabián: No, hacer los talleres, hacerles entender la fuerza histórica que tiene una étnica en cualquier parte de la República Mexicana. No hay talleres, si vemos la historia es muy ralita, este, es muy poco lo que aporta, necesitamos profundizar más para hacerles entender pues, este el por qué este de la necesidad de tener aquí un conocimiento exacto de cualquier etnia natural, porque es muy poco. El libro de quinto año independientemente del libro de historia, está muy saturado de mucha paja y de poca actividad y conocimiento histórico, no hay un reforzamiento que diga, yo aquí tengo en la biblioteca son cuentos, leyendas y narraciones, viene, si viene de los indígenas pero quisiéramos más, yo al menos llegué a la conclusión que la mayoría de mi generación de maestros, de acuerdo de la transformación histórica que se está haciendo actualmente, no sabemos nada, porque con lo nuevo, lo que vimos entonces fue una gran mentira histórica y lo nuevo es la verdad...

Within this denial of school responsibility, some teachers blame the families for putting much pressure on children to give up their mother tongues and for not sharing their ethnicity at school. However, teachers do not seem to acknowledge that children are developing a strong sense of reticence and even shame regarding their ethnicity, mostly reinforced by the implicit racism and misrecognition of the school.

Miss Lidia: [...] We were talking about different cultures in the geography textbook of Jalisco or whatever, about who had relatives and we started to talk about the cultures, then, well, he said: ‘It is just that my mother doesn’t want me to speak like her any more’, and that is why we came here, and he said: ‘My mother speaks with my aunts in their own language’, but they find it difficult, because of the same thing, since he thinks that they are left behind; he does speak, but that is affecting the boy. It seems like the boy has been left out, as if he were told not to speak, not to express himself, because perhaps he could be labelled by others, but he is very quiet and calm and, yes, he is lacking; for example, even in reading, he is at a low level, but we respect his learning process.¹⁶²

In one of the few class observations I was able to do during my fieldwork, in a fifth grade classroom, I had the opportunity to observe the teacher’s approach to the topic of indigenous cultures. During the lessons for that week, they had covered the topic of ‘Our ancestors’ and the teacher asked the students whether any of them were of indigenous descent. I knew who the indigenous students were in the classroom and I observed that they responded with a great deal of enthusiasm and motivation, and the teacher realised that she had some indigenous children in her class. The children seemed so motivated that they even took the initiative of bringing videos and photographs of their parents’ and grandparents’ communities of origin to the class. One girl, Monica, gave me a copy of a video of one of the traditional celebrations in honour of Saint Santiago in Zicuicho, Michoacan. The teacher expressed great satisfaction because of

¹⁶² Mtra. Lidia: [...] estábamos hablando de diferentes culturas en el libro de texto de geografía de Jalisco y no sé qué tanto que quién tenía familiares y empezamos a hablar de las culturas, entonces este, dijo: “es que mi mamá ya no quiere que hable como ella habla”, por eso nos venimos para acá y dijo: “mi mamá habla con mis tías con su lengua”, pero le cuesta mucho trabajo, por lo mismo, como que se siente menos, sí habla pues, pero eso le está afectando al niño. Como que el niño lo tienen relegadito, como que no hables, como que no te desenvuelvas, porque a lo mejor te pueden etiquetar. Pero él es muy tranquilo, es muy calladito y sí le falta, por ejemplo, incluso en las lecturas es un niño bajito, pero le respetamos su proceso de aprendizaje.

the children's response; however, she was overwhelmed by the end-of-year activities and was unable to follow up on the material that the students brought to the class. Several weeks later, because the teacher did not seem to have the time to meet me, she asked me to have the interview during class time in the classroom while the students were working. We discussed the presence of indigenous children in her class but she could not remember which students had told her about their ethnicity during the lesson on 'Our ancestors', so she decided to ask the children directly while I was in the classroom. This is part of the dialogue that ensued:

Miss Edna: Children, do you remember when we had our ancestors class, about the existing languages?

Students: Yes

Miss Edna: Do you remember if you had descendants? What languages did you have?

(and then the teacher tells me:)

Who was it; who told me? There were like three or four kids who said that they had, that their grandparents had another type....

(the teacher keeps speaking to the students:)

Miss Edna: Was it you, dear?

Students: Ivan

Miss Edna: Ivan, you, son, you told me, right?

(...several students speak at the same time...)

Miss Edna: Was it Nahuatl? Which languages were, I mean, which languages did your relatives used to speak, son?

Student 1: Nahuatl

Miss Edna: Nahuatl and who? Juan? Which language? Which language did your relatives speak, son?

Student 2: I can't remember...

Miss Edna: You can't remember, someone else told me, err... at that time they did know, yes, Nahuatl, but someone else told me about another, Pere, Perepecho, someone told me...

Student 3: Me, me too, there is a friend, a friend who came over there, over there they spoke Nahuatl.

Miss Edna: No, but here in the classroom, someone spoke about another...

Student 3: He says that he speaks Totonaco, over here teacher, [he is] Totonaco.

(the teacher explains to me)

Miss Edna: Yes, [the other time] it just happened, a very nice moment just came up.

Luzma: So, it all happened because of the textbook?

Miss Edna: Yes, in Spanish, it was mentioned in Spanish and we took it up again, working that time [inaudible], it was something wonderful for them, to discover it because they didn't even consider it [inaudible], the language from our ancestors and it helped, well, to study history [inaudible], it was matched with the same activity and we studied it...¹⁶³

Monica, the Purepecha girl who participated in my research and who brought the videos of the celebrations to the teacher, only listened to the conversation and did not participate or even raise her hand to talk about her family's ethnicity. Afterwards, in an interview with her, she said that she did not want to say anything in front of her classmates because she felt embarrassed. It seems that Monica responded differently to

¹⁶³Mtra. Edna: Chiquitos, ¿se acuerdan cuando vimos la clase de nuestros antepasados, de las lenguas que hay?

Alumnos: Sí

Mtra. Edna: ¿Se acuerdan quiénes sí tenían descendencia? ¿De qué lenguas venían?

Luego se dirige a mí:

Mtra. Edna: ¿Quién era quién me dijo? Eran como tres, como tres o cuatro chiquitos que me dijeron que venían, que sus abuelitos o tenían otro tipo... ¿eres tú hija?

Alumnos: Iván

Mtra. Edna: Iván, ¿tú hijo, verdad?

...varios alumnos hablan al mismo tiempo...

Mtra. Edna: ¿Náhuatl? ¿Qué idiomas fueron, digo, de qué lenguas hablaban tus familiares, hijo?

Alumno: Náhuatl

Mtra. Edna: Náhuatl y ¿quién? ¿Juan? ¿De qué lengua? ¿Qué lengua hablaban tus familiares, hijo?

Alumno: Ya no me acuerdo

Mtra. Edna. Ya no te acuerdas, alguien más me dijo, este... en ese momento sí sabían, sí, Náhuatl, pero alguien más me dijo otro, Pere, Perepecho, alguien me dijo

Alumno: Yo, yo también, ahí un amigo, uno que llegaron ahí, ahí hablan Náhuatl

Mtra. Edna. No pero de aquí del salón, me dijeron de otro

Alumno: Dice que totonaca, aquí maestra, totonaca

Mtra. Edna: Sí, pero sí se dio así bonito ese momento

Luzma: ¿Entonces fue gracias al libro de texto?

Mtra. Edna. Sí, en español, venía en español, y la retomamos esa vez trabajando [inaudible], fue algo así bonito para ellos, el descubrirlo porque incluso no lo habían ni considerado [inaudible], el de las lenguas de nuestros antepasados y eso permitió cuando vimos, este, historia [inaudible], la identificamos con la misma actividad y la vimos...

the teacher's approach to cultural differences than in her earlier class on ancestors. During the lesson I was able to observe that Monica was motivated and eager to share her cultural inheritance with her teacher. Weeks later, Monica did not feel comfortable sharing her ethnicity again because she felt ashamed. The fact that Monica's teacher did not remember her ethnicity shows that she was relegating Monica's ethnicity of something as a matter of little importance. During the interview, I asked the teacher about Monica and she described her as the 'little brown girl' rather than by her name:

Miss Edna: Monica? Over here, this little brown [girl]? Her, right?

Luzma: Yes

Miss Edna: Monica, well, look, Monica, what I can see is that she's still more shy than [Hugo], she is still more quiet, it is hard to know the way she is, because even though I ask her questions, she just stays quiet, doesn't answer me, and doesn't speak too much. I mean, she listens, listens a lot, but she only participates in the subjects that she feels she understands or when something motivates her to do so, but usually she is only listening to what others say, she avoids participating, which Hugo doesn't do, Hugo answers and he even answers what he doesn't know and there's no problem....¹⁶⁴

The teacher seemed not to have a clear idea of who Monica was, but she differentiated her from the rest of the class, using a racist approach by focusing on the colour of her skin rather than her name. Monica had decided to deny her ethnicity in class to avoid the discrimination that she had experienced the previous year when her classmates called her 'La India Maria' because she was wearing braids. 'Stereotypes are generated through social distance' (Reay, 2004c, p. 1019), so it is clear that Miss Edna would need to reflect more on the 'complexities and nuances inherent in marginal and demonized places and paces' (ibid, p. 1020).

¹⁶⁴ Mtra. Edna: ¿Mónica? ¿Acá esta morenita? ¿Ella, verdad? - Luzma: Sí - Mtra. Edna: Mónica, mire Mónica lo que veo es que ella sí es todavía más reservada que [Hugo], todavía más calladita, ella es difícil de encontrar su forma de ser, porque aunque le pregunto, nada más se queda calladita, no me contesta, no me platica mucho, o sea oye, oye mucho, pero participa en las materias que ella siente dentro de sí que las comprende o que algo la motivó a participar, pero regularmente nada más está escuchando lo que dicen los demás, no tiende a participar, cosa que Hugo no, Hugo contesta y hasta lo que no sabe contesta y no hay problema...

7.6 Institutional habitus and low expectations

Bishop in his research with Māori children found that when low expectations ‘were replaced by an emphasis on empowerment, co-construction of knowledge, cultural recognition and the use of Māori concepts, values and beliefs, students were able to achieve better in school (Bishop 2003 in Goulet & Goulet, 2014, p. 15). Bishop et al. argue that the ‘broad forms of deficit theorizing, locates the problems that indigenous students experience at school with students and their families rather than focusing on how the students are not being well served by schools and education systems’ (Bishop, Ladwig, & Berryman, 2014, p. 187) By examining the teachers’ perceptions of the children’s achievements and family practices, it becomes clear that most teachers hold low expectations for the children’s future and the schooling performance of indigenous children. The teachers seemed surprised when indigenous children, the few that were recognised by them, were among the students with a high attendance, who were clean and tidy and who were making an effort to succeed academically. In addition, perceptions regarding parental care, interest and participation were sometimes surprising for teachers:

Miss Lidia: Look, Luis, Luis has astonished me! Luis comes from a sort of indigenous community, and uses a lot of regional words, look, this little boy is the oldest of the boys and still, he helps her [his mother] to sell fruit, I think, but he is a boy who is very responsible, really responsible and I can tell you this, he hardly misses a class, and I think he has only been absent four times in the whole school year. So, he has got ahead, by himself, himself no matter what; he has found the way to get along in life.¹⁶⁵

These sorts of reactions suggest that some teachers hold low expectations of indigenous children, as if their success was achieved despite of their ethnicity. Luis is a responsible student; nonetheless, Miss Lidia seems to highlight the fact that he comes from a ‘sort of indigenous community’ and therefore she feels astonished about his achievements. In addition, teachers expect children to make an extraordinary effort to progress in life.

¹⁶⁵ Mtra. Lidia: Mira, Luis, Luis me tiene con el ojo cuadrado, Luis viene como de una comunidad indígena, tiene muchas palabras como regionalismos, mira, esta criatura es el mayor de los hombres, más sin embargo, él le ayuda a vender fruta, creo, pero es un niño que es muy responsable, muy responsable y te lo puedo decir, casi no falta, yo creo que tiene en el ciclo escolar unas cuatro faltas. Entonces él ha salido adelante, él solito, él solito a pesar de todo ha salido adelante.

Teachers know that some children to work in order to help their parents, be responsible for attending school and have a high motivation to ‘get along in life’. This belief contributes to teachers’ low expectations of indigenous children’s school achievement, since it is assumed that they have a more ‘difficult’ life.

Miss Lidia: Juan Carlos, umm, well, he also has a very modest mother; they come from a different community, well, but the lady is very committed, and in spite of the fact that she, well, that she does not have any education at all, she is always aware of how her son is doing and how she can help him. *It is kind of difficult for her*, since she cannot understand, well, the orthographic rules.

Luzma: This lady is indigenous; do you know her?

Miss Lidia: Oh yes, yes, she is like indigenous, but the truth is I really don’t, well I am kind of respectful so I don’t ask them, I mean I don’t feel, well, comfortable to ask her, but it’s just the way she expresses herself, and that it seems it is very difficult for her to think of the word she has to say, so then, well, that is when I know, and I figure it out, that she is ... but he is a very committed boy and very responsible too....¹⁶⁶

This is how racism gets inscribed in the teacher’s habitus, within a discourse of ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ approach to ethnicity. Indigenous families are not considered as contributors to the learning community, perpetuating the modern regime of knowledge/power, as Goulet and Goulet argue, ‘[h]istorical, colonial, and authoritarian relationships are replaced with more equitable relationships in the classroom, in the school decision making, and in the community’ (2014, p. 25).

In the teachers’ perceptions, there is also a strong intertwining between economic position and ethnicity. In most cases, it seems that representations of social class or students’ poverty contexts contributes to the invisibility of indigenous children in the

¹⁶⁶ Mtra. Lidia: Juan Carlos, este bueno, es un niño también que la mamá es muy sencilla, vienen de otra comunidad diferente pues, pero la señora muy comprometida, a pesar de todo su este, que no tiene la señora escolaridad, ella está al pendiente de cómo va su hijo, en cómo lo puede apoyar. Le cuesta trabajo, no puede entender este, las reglas ortográficas.

Luzma: La señora es indígena, ¿usted la conoce?

Mtra. Lidia: Sí, sí, sí es como indígena, pero yo la verdad no me, me como que soy muy respetuosa de preguntarles, o sea no me siento pues, bien en preguntarle, pero simplemente en la forma de expresarse y que les cuesta trabajo pensar en la palabra que tienen qué decir, entonces este pos me entero, uno saca por deducción, que es... pero es un niño muy comprometido y muy responsable también...

schools. As Laureau (2000:2) argues, 'social class (independent of ability) does affect schooling. Teachers ask for parent involvement; social class shapes the resources that parents have at their disposal to comply with teachers' requests for assistance'.

I wanted to know about the challenges that the teachers face within diverse classrooms; however, most of the answers were concerned again with a certain set of attitudes and behaviours that were expected from the students and their families. Such is the case in the following account:

Luzma: What type of challenges does a teacher face when there are indigenous children in his/her classroom?¹⁶⁷

Mrs. Esperanza: Well, for me, it would be a challenge that they were the first in the class, that they were responsible, that they were hardworking, that they were outstanding, that for me would be a challenge.¹⁶⁸

I have the impression that Mrs. Esperanza understood my question differently, and she answered it by explaining her expectations about indigenous children in the school rather than the challenges within the classroom. She insisted that Alejandro and another girl, Carla, who were struggling academically, were indigenous, but neither of the children actually was; however, Silvia, a Purepecha girl, and Luis Miguel, a Totonaco boy, were not identified in Mrs. Esperanza's classroom.

In the teachers' narratives, it is common to note a 'discourse of complaint'. This 'discourse of complaint' blames factors such as family practices, lack of material resources and administrative forces that are beyond the teachers' control and that make them feel hopeless about the possibility of impacting on the children's lives. The teachers seem to be internalising a discourse where their students have reduced or null opportunities for social mobility. Deficit discourses have been studied in several countries for several decades with a great emphasis on the ethnic minorities (Connolly, 2004; Mac an Ghaill, 1988, 1999; MacLeod, 1987). In the United States, for example, Paris argues as follows:

¹⁶⁷ Luzma: ¿Qué tipo de retos representa para un maestro tener niños indígenas en un salón de clases?

¹⁶⁸ Mtra. Esperanza: Bueno, pues para mí sería un reto que fueran de los primeros de la clase, que fueran responsables, que fueran trabajadores, que fueran sobresalientes, este para mí sería un reto

Simply put, the goal of deficit approaches was to eradicate the linguistic, literate, and cultural practices many students of colour brought from their homes and communities and to replace them with what were viewed as superior practices. Examples of deficit approaches abound throughout the 20th century. From federal ‘Indian schools’ with their goal of forcibly stripping Native languages and cultures from indigenous American students and communities (reviewed and critiqued in Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006), to the ‘culture of poverty’ research of the 1960s and 1970s (Jensen, 1969, is an infamous example of such research) with the view that the home cultures and communities of poor students of colour were bankrupt of any language and cultural practices of value in schools and society (see Labov, 1972, for an early critique of culture of poverty research based in his studies with African American Language speakers). (Paris, 2012, p. 94)

Although still insufficient in overcoming racist structures in the United States, at least there have been epistemological and pedagogical efforts to try to ‘join the home and community practices, histories, and activities of students and communities of color with dominant school ones in meaningful ways that do not devalue either in the process of schooling learning and access’ (Paris, 2012, p. 95).

But what I want to emphasise is that this deficit model orientation is used to link cognitive and learning abilities and students’ low academic success with cultural deprivation, lack of interest and ethnicity. In teachers’ interviews, it became clear that there is a consensus that few of their students will finish secondary school; however, these arguments rarely are part of a broader critique of the economic and social system. The social reality of the school is described and analysed by teachers within individualised discourses of self-responsibility blaming children’s lack of interest and motivation regarding their education, the parents’ occupations and long shifts or the context of poverty and violence of the neighbourhoods; very rarely did the teachers provide a broader analysis of the oppressive socioeconomic structures that were embedded in the marginalised sectors of society and the enormous influence that these have on children’s schooling experiences.

This narrative is a consequence of the actual technocratic and neoliberal educational model where issues such as historical, cultural, economic and ideological conditions of an individual generally go unquestioned. From this narrow and uncritical perspective, the teachers feel frustrated and helpless because, regardless of their efforts to ‘advise’ the families about how to ‘educate’ their children and ‘advise’ the children on how to make the most of their schooling, nothing seems to change in the long run. Within the neoliberal educational discourses, teachers are also to be blamed. The system holds teachers responsible for the results of their students, but the system itself leaves very little agency for teachers to recognise the cultural diversity within their heterogeneous classrooms.

7.5 Summary

As discussed throughout the chapter, most teachers were not aware of the presence of indigenous children in their classrooms. Teachers’ understandings of the concept of cultural diversity are highly influenced by the *doxa* of the Mexican educational system, which negates cultural differences. The Mexican school has traditionally been conceived as homogeneous in terms of its student population: there are schools for indigenous peoples, schools for urban and rural children, schools for children with special needs and private schools for the middle and upper classes. Approaches to an inclusive education are still very limited and, therefore, teacher’s conceptions are highly influenced by educational policies that tend to homogenise groups of students, limiting their possibilities to broaden their vision and teaching practices in a more culturally sensitive way.

Teachers have not been able to develop the cultural awareness nor the mechanisms for identifying the indigenous population in their schools. This situation shows the small degree of agency teachers have to change the status of things within a system that is implicitly racist. It is, therefore, not surprising that teachers have a weak understanding of ‘equality’ and subscribe to an ethos of ‘self-responsibility’ that tends to blame students for not achieving better academic results. Teachers seem to feel that what they are doing is expected of them according to the demands of a homogenising system. Teacher Professionalisation Programmes are not designed to teach how to recognise the richness of cultural diversity and to challenge any expression of racism and discrimination, either institutional or social. Not only teachers, but also mestizo and

indigenous students, seem to be reproducing colonial discourses also reinforced by the institutional habitus promoted since the second decade of the 20th century with the Vasconcelos's idea of mestizos being a 'cosmic race' (Vasconcelos, 1925).

Within the field of racist educational policies and structures in addition to colonial and neoliberal discourses, it is difficult to expect teachers' practices to be different.

Indigenous children do not find in their teachers' approaches a way to reinforce their identities. On the contrary, indigenous children's ethnic identities, within Mexican schooling, are constrained by feelings of caution and invisibility.

Chapter 8. Conclusions and Policy Implications

8.1 Introduction

This last chapter has the aim of providing some conclusions, limitations and a future research agenda of my research study, along with some policy recommendations. Two main research questions guided my study:

RQ1: What are the processes of identity formation of indigenous children in Mexican schools, especially in terms of their ethnic identification?

RQ2: How do teachers understand cultural diversity, and how do they see their role in promoting or undermining the children's ethnicities?

I summarise the findings of the last section of the dissertation in this chapter. First, I discuss some of the processes of identity formation that I was able to identify within the schooling experiences of indigenous children. Second, I address the role of the urban Mexican school within those schooling processes. Third, I write about some policy recommendations to strengthen ethnic identities within the context of intercultural education in Mexico; and finally, I conclude with some of the limitations of this study and a future research agenda.

8.2 Processes of identity formation

Process 1: Indigenous children are creating a series of adaptation skills to navigate the field of the school, within a 'habitus tug'.

The processes of identity formation of indigenous children are conflictual and sometimes contradictory, especially in the field of the schooling, as a place of struggle, confrontation and constant negotiation (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013). As was noted in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, some indigenous children self-identified with their ethnic origins, while others dis-identified with them (Skeggs, 1997). This tension shows that their identity formation is a fragile process in which children often move in both directions,

identifying and dis-identifying themselves with their ethnicities. In this way, children are living a habitus, as suggested by Ingram ‘within two incompatible fields: the field of origin (incorporating family background, geographical isolation and social class)’ (2011, p. 289). I would include ethnicity too, as well as the educational field of the urban school and the ‘peer groups developed in educational settings. In these conditions, the habitus is destabilized as it is caught in a tug between two conflicting social fields’ (ibid). This was seen in some children’s narratives as feelings of shame interwoven with nostalgia; dealing with desires to live in the city or going back to the communities of origin; admiring their mother’s traditional attires or feeling ashamed for wearing them; wanting to speak their mother tongues and denying their parents as native speakers. Children learn to navigate the contradictions of the conflicting field of the school and their communities or origin, by accommodating their ‘habitus tug’ (Ingram, 2011).

In the processes of developing learner identities, school practices reinforce the sense of self-regulation and independent work of the indigenous students in which they frequently have to deal with a lack of accountability in some teachers’ practices, and at times an environment of violence against misbehaviour or poor achievement. The school has created a strong meritocratic system of grades and ‘frames of honour’ that set rigid parameters around what a ‘good student’ should be. Effort and hard work were often reported by children as the most important element in succeeding at school, thus creating a system characterised by a neoliberal perspective where the responsibility lies mainly in the students’ willingness to work hard.

The ways indigenous students respond and interact with their school environment are centred around an effort to ‘fit in’. Most indigenous children in this research try to perform the expected attributes of a ‘good learner’, as they are to be found in the dominant society as a whole, where indigenous peoples are still stigmatised as quiet and docile bodies. Indigenous children are more likely to emphasise their attempts at being quiet and obedient in class in order to comply with the institutional habitus of the school. As stated by Cornbleth, ‘[a]ttention to institutional habitus unmasks key ways in which the status quo and its inequalities are maintained and modified’ (Cornbleth, 2010, p. 14).

The ethnic identities of indigenous children are in continuous transformation. They relate to their cultural past as members of an immigrant community in an urban setting and, at the same time, they are immersed within unequal power relationships that can be viewed as new forms of colonialism. As Hall notes:

Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything else which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power... cultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. (Hall in Rassool, 2004, p. 237)

Process 2: In the processes of identity formation, the fields of the family and the fields of the school offer children different educational values and experiences.

As Bertely (2006b) argues, there is a difference between a homogenising national project of schooling and the processes of ethno-genesis of many indigenous communities. Schooling is meant to provide the minimum skills (literacy and maths) in the form of a certificate or academic credential in order to compete within the labour market. Family and community members, on the other hand, provide a different education, reinforcing their own values, maybe transmitting language, warning against possible dangers in the relationship with the dominant others, and developing protective dispositions, fears but most importantly, ways to get attached to their territories (either symbolic or geographical) in their children. However, this process of being is also experienced by children as a habitus tug, or in Bourdieu's words, 'double binds' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 160), as a hybrid habitus that is subject to the unequal dynamics of power between the fields of the school and the informal education of indigenous traditions.

There are unequal dynamics within the field of the school that, if they are not made conscious and problematised, will be reproduced by the school as a policy of '*mestizaje*'; a new form of neo-colonialism (Cusicanqui, 2014). A neo-colonisation process was observed as to how some indigenous children feel about how they look, whether they or their families wear traditional clothes, and whether or not they speak

the language. Respectability, hard work and cleanliness were also found in indigenous' children's representations within the school setting, highlighting the self-imposition of qualities of docility and diligence by indigenous children in order to be accepted by the dominant group. Indigenous children possess a localised cultural capital that is not recognised by the school system.

Localised cultural capital of indigenous children is a denied capital. Schools, by neglecting and 'invisibilising' indigenous children, reproduce a system of domination since the indigenous' children subcultural capital is not recognised and thus mobilised within the field of the school, although it is a type of capital that is highly valued in their communities of origin. For those children who speak the language, they are able to help with agricultural activities and be included within the *habitus* of their communities of origin.

Process 3: Indigenous children are undergoing a process of language loss of their mother tongues.

Indigenous children have different degrees of language proficiency, although none of them reported the ability to speak fluently in their mother tongues. Most of them expressed a desire to learn, especially in order to communicate with their grandparents and other members of their families in the communities of origin. Most indigenous parents no longer speak to their children in their mother tongues, either because they themselves do not feel proficient enough or because they do not want their children to have difficulties learning Spanish and achieving success at school. Within this scenario, the role of the grandparents is a key part of the possibility of revitalising indigenous languages. This is an important opportunity for schools to open up spaces for participation of the indigenous children's grandparents who are living in the city, so that language and traditional knowledge can be rescued and dignified. As was found in the research conducted by Léo, McCabe and Avilés (2013), bottom-up approaches should be implemented to recover the language loss in indigenous communities in Mexico:

...[T]hrough a community-based effort, NLGW¹⁶⁹ contributes to the development of pedagogical contents adapted to sociolinguistic contexts, flowing in a continuum of orality-literacy-orality; a continuum that

¹⁶⁹ Native Literacy and Grammar Workshops (NLGW)

highlights the decisive role that orality plays in language empowerment and rehabilitation. (Léo, McCabe, & Avilés, 2013, p. 432)

Process 4: There are different degrees of attachment to the communities of origin of indigenous children. The sense of belonging to their territories of origin could promote a reinforcement of children's ethnic identities.

Indigenous children who regularly visit the communities of origin of their parents or grandparents and those who listen to stories and anecdotes of their communities are more likely to identify positively with their ethnic origins than those who do not visit often or whose parents have a negative association to being of indigenous origin, as shown in Chapter 5.

The role of the grandparents in the process of identity formation was shown in some of the indigenous children's narratives to be a crucial factor in terms of the transmission of cultural and territorial capital. Grandparents are the link to their roots and traditional knowledge for indigenous children. Most indigenous families within urban settings live with frequent demands to respond to the needs of their original territories (harvest, traditional celebrations, helping with the living and medical expenses of older family members, etc.). This sense of belonging creates ethnic links even within non-geographical contexts (Czarny, 2006).

8.3 The role of the schools in the development of ethnic identities

Role 1: Urban schools are not prepared to respond to the new multicultural composition of their classrooms and school communities.

The new composition of the Mexican urban school as multicultural is yet invisible and unrecognised. As it was found in this research study, within two schools in the same neighbourhood, there were Mazahua, Nahuatl, Purepecha and Tononaca families, all of them not recognised by the institutional habitus of the schools. One of the most dangerous consequences of the *mestizaje* policies is that teachers try to see 'all children as equal', contributing to the invisibility of indigenous children.

The Mexican urban school is unprepared to effectively respond to cultural diversity. Institutional and pedagogical approaches still follow homogenising methods where social and cultural differences are ignored. As a consequence, the school is reproducing an assimilation model that education policy discourses have been trying to avoid for decades. Discrimination against indigenous children takes the form of ethnic blindness and a lack of cultural awareness within the school system. The school is not an open space to express cultural differences and if those cultural differences appear, indigenous children express feelings of shame and deny. Discrimination at school is expressed in subtle but institutionalised ways (Gillborn, 2008). Unless the racism is accepted and confronted within schools, the colonial history will reproduce itself, taking the school as one of the nuclei for its reproduction (Aquino, 2013).

Most of the school staff hold low expectations of children's opportunities for social mobility, as shown in Chapter 7. Teachers perceive the social reality in which children live as a sentence from which it is very unlikely to escape. Indigenous children's right to a culturally relevant education has been replaced by discourses of individual responsibility by students and their families. As Bourdieu argues, '[l]ittle by little, the logic of collective responsibility tends to replace that of individual responsibility, which leads to 'blaming the victim' (Bourdieu & Champagne, 1999, p. 422). These negative discourses are characterised by blaming working families for the lack of time and blaming children for their lack of interest and motivation in school matters. As argued by Diamond, et al., 'teacher's sense of responsibility for student learning is connected to their beliefs about students' academic abilities through a set of organisationally embedded expectations regarding what is possible for students from particular backgrounds' (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004, p. 76), also understood as institutional habitus. Most children try to succeed even within these negative discourses and low expectations – there is a spirit of making an effort and trying hard – however, there is no awareness of their right to receive a quality education and the responsibility of the schools to make children's aspirations real and possible. The school practices should reinforce children's choices and desires for social mobility. I consider this to be one of the main contributions of my research, the possibility to highlight the absence of the recognition of indigenous rights (De la Peña, 2006) within the field of the school.

Role 2: By neglecting the ethnic context of indigenous children, schools are limiting their ethnic identities.

Through the process of the research, most indigenous children enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on their ethnic origins and elaborate on their choices and personal positioning about them. The voice and recognition of the other as culturally different and valued (the researcher in this case) gave them the possibility of feeling themselves respected and secure to share their own cultural richness. As argued in the research conducted by Theron et al. in South Africa, the challenge is to ‘champion school ecologies that are respectfully dedicated to promoting positive youth adjustment in child rights-centred ways’ (Theron et al., 2014, p. 262). In this way, it can be said that indigenous children’s identities are constructed both through self-representation and through the recognition of differences. Identity formation processes are embodied (Archer, 2003; Ken, 2008; Reay 2004b) as indigenous children recognise otherness in terms of their own differences, not only focusing on indigenous languages, but also on physical attributes, the place of origins of their parents, family values, traditions, celebrations and ways of relating to nature and to other people.

Schools have a great opportunity to reinforce the ethnic identity of indigenous children. As the practice of this research showed, the symbolic violence that children experience within urban contexts does not open up opportunities for them to reflect on their own ethnic origins unless there are systematic actions to promote them. Once children open up and become aware of their ethnicity, they positively elaborate on their personal ethnic positioning.

8.4 Policy Implications

The meritocratic system in Mexico has strengthened in the last decade because of neoliberal influences in the political and economic arenas. The latest Educational Reform of 2016 is a powerful example where, influenced by international rankings conducted by the OECD and policy recommendations by the World Bank and the IDB, a deep transformation has taken place in teacher professionalisation policies, with the formation of the Service of Professional Teaching (SPF). The field of education in

Mexico has survived many challenges in the last decade for two reasons: 1) the great power of the Teacher Union, with a high degree of corruption among its members, and 2) the enormous bureaucracy of an educational system that spends 70 percent of its budget in salaries and professional services, and is one of the countries with the highest investment in education. The Educational Reform of 2016 attempts to decrease the administrative burden in the schools and focus on pedagogical matters, although in practice, the implementation of the reform has been extremely painful for teachers, as the starting phase of the reform was to evaluate the practice and knowledge of teachers and they have been the focus of critiques in the media around the country for ‘failing’ the entrance and permanence exams.

The current Educational Model 2016 makes reference to the importance of including indigenous knowledge in the curriculum and ends up with practices that might lead to discrimination within schools; it recognises the importance of revitalising mother tongues and acknowledges Mexico as a multicultural and multilingual nation (SEP, 2016, pp. 65-68). However, there is no acknowledgment of the historical debt towards indigenous peoples, and as part of a meritocratic discourse, it seems that only with a new and more comprehensive approach to education can equity and justice be applied to their social conditions. On the other hand, the model contains no reference to the history of colonisation and the current racism that have put indigenous peoples at a profound disadvantaged compared to the rest of the population. The cultural capital of indigenous children is present briefly in the educational policies discourse, but in practice, there is only the reproduction of middle class values within the school field. This enables the ‘system by and large open to all yet strictly reserved for a few, to achieve the tour de force of uniting the appearance of “democratization” with the reality of social reproduction, which takes place on a higher level of dissimulation and consequently with a greater effect of social legitimation’ (Bourdieu & Champagne, 1999, pp. 424-425).

One of the main issues of indigenous education in many parts of the world is the imposition of ‘white, middle-class, Euro-centred views of teaching and learning’ (Goulet & Goulet, 2014, p. 5). Mexico seems to be two or three decades behind in the implementation of antiracist approaches to indigenous education compared to countries such as Canada, Australia or New Zealand, where a process of recognition of the colonisation effects leads to the implementation of culturally sustaining pedagogies and

programmes within the schools that leverages the ethnic identities of indigenous peoples and improves their schooling opportunities (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Paris, 2012). Within this process, teachers have raised an awareness of their role of incorporating 'Indigenous knowledge and understandings (epistemologies) and to use indigenous practices and methods to support learning and fully develop student's potential' (Goulet & Goulet, 2014, p. 5). In Mexico, these discourses are completely absent from the institutional habitus of the schools and the education policies. However, several autonomous projects outside of the education system, such as the Union of Teachers for a New Education for Mexico (UNEM) and the Network of Inductive Intercultural Education (REDIIN), are taking place and they are successfully developing materials and showing the richness of indigenous pedagogies and how those could be of great use for urban schools as well, promoting the formation of new capitals (Bertely, 2005; 2008; 2009; 2011; Bertely, Gasché, & Podestá, 2008). These are examples of how agents outside the institutional field of the school are able to promote meaningful changes to their social conditions.

Multicultural and intercultural education policies have been insufficient for recognising and respecting indigenous children identities (Bermúdez, 2010). In fact, policies of intercultural education are a charade if racism and discrimination are not addressed within the educational system. Intercultural education is an ethical discourse with no implications for educational practices (Gasché, 2010). The discourses of intercultural education directed towards reducing inequalities between indigenous and non-indigenous children are more a rhetorical than a pedagogical tool. Teachers and school staff are not prepared to recognise cultural differences among their students and they tend to homogenise their population. Poverty, however, is an important marker that captures the teachers' attention when it becomes visible through distinct attributes, such as the lack of cleanliness of the children.

This study suggests several lines of pedagogical implications for strengthening indigenous children's schooling experiences:

1. The implementation of strategies of differentiated education within classrooms to end the tendency of teaching all the students the same contents and with the same approaches.

2. The development of practices of knowing the students' cultural, social and linguistic capital, assessing their pedagogical needs in order to design educational approaches that respond to those contexts in relevant ways. Educational policies concerned with cultural diversity (intercultural education) have not been successful enough to meet the specific needs of children's different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. There is an urgent need for a contextualised diagnosis by an ethnic group in urban schools and to recognise their own traditional knowledge to enrich the urban curricula and to model teachers on how to do it.
3. The promotion of teacher's professional development programmes with a cultural awareness approach in teachers' practices, avoiding deficit discourses against children and their families, and, instead, focusing on how schools might be committed to widening children's life opportunities.

If racism and ethnic discrimination is not confronted within the school openly, the school will also be contributing to limiting indigenous children opportunities to live their identities openly and proudly (Gillborn, 2008). Intercultural education is 'soft on racism' (ibid). As Gillborn argues with regards to multicultural education, intercultural education does not address 'the social, political and economic power relations which have resulted in the exploitation of minority groups' (Gillborn, 1990, p. 153). Intercultural education, thus, has a naïve conception of cultural diversity and has not been able to propose specific strategies to overcome existing power asymmetries and structural inequalities. In Mexico and Latin America in general, the dominant discourses still focus on celebrating cultural diversity as a romantic proposition with no political implications of equality and justice. I argue that the experience of implementing anti-racist education in countries such as the UK has many lessons to offer the Latin American context, especially in terms of using a language that clearly defies the asymmetrical relationships between ethnic minorities and majority groups. As Brandt (in Gillborn, 1990) argues, anti-racist education is, by nature, political and oppositional and directly addresses power relationships.

I believe that intercultural education in Latin America is an enormously valuable education policy; however, it should be enriched with a more focused approach specifically directed to overcoming discrimination and racism within schools. I am not

arguing that intercultural education should be replaced by anti-racist education, especially because anti-racist education policies could lead to essentialisms and reductionisms and could also reinforce the dualism that we are trying to overcome (Gillborn, 1990, 2008). What I am arguing, though, is that intercultural education should start using a language that denounces racism and discrimination in order to increase awareness not only in the educational sector but also in other social spheres, starting with the recognition of our own colonial history in order to move forward to the politics of cultural difference (Mac an Ghaill, 1999; Wade, 1997).

As argued by Czarny, it is not possible to talk about indigenous peoples in urban contexts without considering the debates around collective rights, moral communities and community scenarios, where there are processes of cultural reconfiguration and re-signification of urban spaces, as sites of struggle and resistance towards the official policies. In this way, it is a challenge for educational research to contribute to the transformation of the state, with norms, laws and daily practices, where peoples become active parts of societies recognised as multicultural and multi-ethnic, instead of being targeted by different actions and intercultural and bilingual policies. Those peoples are sectors that have been historically disparaged and neglected, and who have the capacity of exercising their individual and collective rights in the territories where they inhabit, either in rural or urban environments (my translation 2013, p. 275).

The new debates around intercultural education must take into account the relationship between territory, autonomy and intercultural education as several debates have been taken place in other countries in Latin America (Bertely, 2015; Dietz, 2003). This study was framed within the effort to make a contribution to the politics of identity movement and the recognition of indigenous people's rights, collectively and individually (Bertely, 2015). It was my intention not only to highlight the importance of listening to children's perspective as part of the cultural composition of the urban schools, but also to show the struggles to be loyal to those voices and to avoid them being drowned by other voices within the schools and even by the researcher's voice.

8.5. Limitations and further research

As Wade suggests, ethnographic fieldwork is the only research method that allows us

‘to see’ the discursive constructs and social practices permeated by colonial histories of oppression and discrimination. This research study was concerned with listening to children’s voices above other voices in the educational setting. This was not an easy task, and I encountered several methodological and epistemological implications:

1. Conducting a ‘critical ethnography’ could become more an idealistic discourse than a real practice. I found myself losing the indigenous children’s voices and listening more to my own interpretation of the data. There is a need to promote research studies of native authorship (Bertely, 2004, 2005, 2006b) where the intervention of non-indigenous researchers becomes secondary. Even though in Mexico, there have been efforts made in this regard (i.e. Bertely, 2005, 2015; Podestá, 2007), they are still insufficient to respond to the richness and diversity of cultures in the country.
2. Educational research studies are still very limited and do not include children’s perspectives on them; they are mainly focused on teachers. There is a need to differentiate between indigenous groups within schools in order to promote lines of action that respond to their specific needs (Czarny & Martínez, 2013; Martínez - Casas & Rojas, 2006), assuming that there is no common student voice but a ‘cacophony of competing voices’ (Arnot & Reay, 2007). Even though this research had the purpose of privileging indigenous children’s voices, other studies are needed that also analyse mestizo children’s voices in order to contrast them and recognise how class and ethnic privileges work in urban contexts. Comparative studies on ethnicity, gender and class are also needed in order to offer a more complete view of the system of inequalities in Mexico. Also, it is important to consider the experiences of indigenous children whose families are also migrants from the countryside in order to see the commonalities with other indigenous children (Guerrero, 2012).
3. Educational ethnographies that are collaborative, decolonialising and dialogical (Bertely, 2005, 2015), as well as having a collective theorisation, are needed in order to make proposals and projects from a real intercultural perspective.
4. In my attempts at understanding ethnic identities, I found myself with the difficulty of having to identify indigenous children in urban schools. This situation made me

feel that I was imposing a colonial concept on the children's lives, especially after I examined their reactions to the word 'indigenous', a concept that was clearly remote to them (Robles & Cardoso, 2007). Even though I knew that was the 'politically correct' term to use, it did not seem to be a familiar concept to children, and some of them even looked stunned when they heard the term. The word 'indigenous' still carries negative connotations, and as argued by indigenous scholars, it is a colonial way to name a myriad of cultures (ibid). Interestingly, after the first interview, the children seemed to feel more comfortable about using the term, and they even revised their opinions about the language and the ethnic identifications of their families by the second interview. It was as if the children were testing my reactions to see whether I was trustworthy enough to hear their stories. Influenced by their families own or others' experiences, many indigenous children decided that it was better not to discuss their ethnicity in the school setting in order to avoid conflict and stereotyping. This represented a methodological challenge for me because I realise that I had to address this matter with children in a very careful and respectful way. I decided to ask them about this topic only in one-to-one interviews. I always endeavoured to visibly show my interest in stories related to different languages, communities located in other states and different cultural traditions. The first interview encouraged children to ask their parents and grandparents for more information about their communities of origin, language, traditions, etc., so that they would have more to share with me during the next interview. It is through a process of self-reflection that habitus can be transformed as well. as suggested by Wacquant, 'it is a process of self-work' (2014, p. 122). Time to reflect is a crucial element in ethnographic work, as stated by Ingram '[a]llowing participants the time to think about the questions and their response leads to a more considered engagement with the research' (2011, p. 292)

5. Qualitative longitudinal studies are needed in order to follow up on the processes of identity formation of these children in future years to compare the transformation in their habitus (Reay, 2004b). It would also be interesting to understand the choices that children and their families follow when they finish secondary school, following up those who finish high school and seeing if they consider attending university or whether they go back permanently to their communities of origin. I am currently conducting fieldwork in the same schools for a national research project on literacy

and indigenous children; I might be able to contact some of my participants again in order to conduct a comparative study in the coming years.

6. The dissemination of results is one of the most challenging stages of conducting research. The amount of information generated, as Reay argues, is ‘both difficult for teachers to hear and do anything about’ (2006, p. 179). I am committed to sharing the results of this research project with a diverse audience – policy makers, teachers, teacher training institutions, research groups, non-governmental and indigenous organisations – with the purpose of opening up spaces of dialogue that might enable the development of strategies to improve the schooling experiences of indigenous children in urban schools.
7. There are few research studies that highlight the ethno-political processes outside of the school system that promote the production and reproduction of native cultural practices in scenarios that go beyond the territories of the communities of origin, where a more active citizenship and cultural agency is under indigenous control (Czarny & Martínez, 2013, p. 272).

There were several limitations to this research study:

1. It was not possible to compare indigenous and mestizo groups as it was intended to. The research design aimed to focus on indigenous children’s experiences, and a better approach would have been to compare indigenous children’s experiences according to ethnic group, gender and age year in different public schools. Additionally, the comparison between a private and a public school was also a problematic one. The reality in the public school was very different from the private one, with the number of indigenous students in each of them varying substantially.
2. Another important limitation of this study was the interview protocol. Interviews were always complex endeavours, especially with young children. A more *active and methodical listening approach* (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 609) was needed in order to reduce the moments in which children might have felt uncomfortable or intimidated.

3. Transcription was also a limiting task, especially since most of the interviews took place in the playground of the school and some of the audio recordings were not easy to transcribe. Additionally, translation was problematic since most of the children's interviews were highly contextual and sometimes the meaning got lost. That is the reason why I decided to include the original quote as a footnote so a Spanish speaker could have access to the richness of the original data.
4. I also consider that using the term 'indigenous' in my interviews with the children was a method based in a neo-colonial perspective. I now think that if I had constructed my interview questions differently, the children might have identified themselves with their ethnic origins more easily.

8.5 Summary


After almost a decade of reflecting on my research results on the experiences of indigenous children in urban schools, I can conclude that it is not the field of the school, as it is at the moment, where ethnic identities will be strengthened unless processes of '*Indianisation*' of the school system take place (Bertely, 2005). In this way, cultural capital would be mobilised and, therefore, habitus would be transformed (Gaddis, 2011). Now, more than ever, I see the field of the indigenous communities, either symbolic or geographical, as the social field where a more profound transformation can take place in recognition of their individual and collective rights, built up from the bottom, with the active participation of the communities. It is through the recognition of autonomous and communitarian educational projects where other types of citizenship (more active, ethnic and intercultural) are taking place (Bertely, 2015). It is, however, the responsibility of the urban school to not limit or undermine these processes by imposing neo-colonial ideologies of *mestizaje* on young indigenous children, instead allowing the implementation of new 'ethnic citizenships', where they are able to share their own values with the dominant group society (De la Peña, 1999), creating a hybrid habitus. As argued by Wacquant, '[i]mperial domination also fosters the diffusion of *hybrid habitus* propelling splintered conducts, expectations, and aspirations, which create an opening for the deliberate shaping of consciousness by political action' (Wacquant, 2014, p. 127).

It is through the recognition of the richness of the indigenous and autonomous education practices, like those in Chiapas, Guerrero, Jalisco, Oaxaca, Michoacan and Yucatan, that the urban public school can benefit from a deep transformation of its institutional and social habitus, where real learning communities can take place in a climate of respect, tolerance and reciprocity as the axis of the ‘communality’ (Esteva, 2015; Martínez Luna, 2013), incorporating traditional knowledge, and where the philosophy of ‘Good Living’ (‘El Buen Vivir’) is not only directed towards indigenous peoples but also to the dominant society (De la Peña, 1999).

It is my hope that this study opens up opportunities for indigenous children to be visible and valued within urban schools in Mexico. They are inheritors of so much cultural wisdom that could enrich the educational processes of all children in Mexico. The challenge is enormous if we want to live within a real intercultural society: in order to let other cultures to flourish, we need to overcome the racism and discrimination in which we all participate in different ways.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Official permission of the Secretariat of Public Education for accessing schools

 **GOBIERNO DE JALISCO**
PODER EJECUTIVO
SECRETARÍA DE EDUCACIÓN

Coordinación General de Educación Básica
Dirección General de Educación Primaria
D.G.E.P.5733-04/05

Zapopan Jal., miércoles, 27 de octubre de 2004

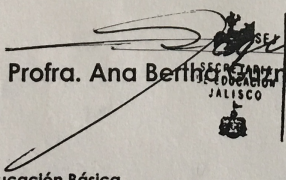

C. Dr. Agustín Escobar Latapi
Subdirector de la Unidad Occidente
del Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios
Superiores en Antropología Social
Presente.-

De acuerdo a su solicitud fechada 13 de octubre de 2004, y en base a las características que nos da a conocer a través de su escrito le notifico que no existe ningún inconveniente para que asista a las Escuelas Primarias de la Zona Metropolitana de Guadalajara que requiere, siempre y cuando confirme con los directores de las mismas el tiempo que permanecerán en el proceso de información, delimitando cuales son sus actividades y quien será el profesor tutor responsable de los grupos.

Lo invitamos a compartir su información que consideramos es de alta trascendencia para el apoyo educativo interdisciplinario que se pueda aplicar para un Proyecto de Multiculturalidad.

Sin otro particular por el momento, aprovecho la ocasión para enviarle un cordial saludo.

Atentamente
"2004, Año del Centenario del Natalicio de Agustín Yáñez"
Directora General de Educación Primaria


Profra. Ana Bertha Salazar Aldrete
 **SECRETARIA DE EDUCACION**
DIRECCION GENERAL DE EDUCACION PRIMARIA

c.c.p. Coordinación de Educación Básica.
Profr. Hilario de la Cruz.- Director de Educación Indígena.
Lic. Guadalupe Elizondo Vega.- Representante de la Secretaría de Educación.
Archivo.

ABGA/CJCM/MONY*

Avenida Central No. 615. Colonia Residencial Poniente. Zapopan, Jalisco. C.P. 45136. Teléfono 3678 7500

Appendix 2: Introduction letter for principals and teachers

Guadalajara, Jal., 18 de octubre de 2006

Estimado(a) Sr(a). Director(a),

Reciba un cordial saludo y mis mejores deseos para que el presente ciclo escolar marche de la mejor manera.

Soy estudiante de doctorado en educación en la Universidad de Cambridge, en Inglaterra. Me encuentro en la etapa de recolección de datos para mi tesis doctoral, y es por esta razón que me pongo en contacto con usted para solicitarle su apoyo para la realización de esta investigación en la escuela que usted dirige. A continuación explico brevemente el objetivo y la metodología de investigación.

El objetivo de mi investigación es entender de qué manera la **diversidad cultural y social** juega un papel importante en las experiencias de los estudiantes en escuelas primarias en el municipio de Zapopan. Concretamente estaré concentrada en observar y hablar con los estudiantes sobre sus interacciones y sus procesos de adaptación a la escuela; todo esto con el fin de identificar algunas de sus necesidades educativas y sugerir posibles mejoras a las políticas de atención de estudiantes de diferentes contextos socioculturales.

La metodología sugerida es la **etnografía** escolar, por medio de la cual el investigador se compromete a pasar el tiempo necesario en la escuela con el fin de conocer de cerca la situación que se desea entender por medio de **observaciones** y **entrevistas**. De esta manera, mi propósito es dedicarme el tiempo que resta del presente **ciclo escolar 2006-2007** a esta tarea. Mi asistencia a la escuela sería por lo menos tres veces a la semana durante todo el ciclo escolar. Mi trabajo consistiría en realizar observaciones en el aula, los recreos, ceremonias cívicas y algunos otros eventos relevantes en la vida de escuela. Además de entrevistar a algunos(as) estudiantes en distintos momentos del año escolar, quienes son el eje central de esta investigación, también trataría de entablar conversaciones con algunos(as) maestros(as) y personal administrativo. Es importante señalar que toda la información que se recoja será manejada en completa confidencialidad y que los nombres de las personas y de la escuela se mantendrán anónimos durante el trabajo de campo, así como durante la etapa de análisis y reporte de resultados.

Reconociendo que mi presencia como agente externo a la escuela es una cuestión poco común, quisiera ofrecer mi entera disposición a colaborar en las tareas de la escuela en que usted considere que mi experiencia y formación podrían ser de utilidad, ya sea en cuestiones administrativas o brindando apoyo tanto a los maestros como a los estudiantes. Será un gran placer para mí ser parte de la vida de la escuela durante este año académico.

Agradeciendo de antemano su gentileza al colaborar en este proyecto de investigación, le reitero mi total disposición a colaborar en las tareas que usted considere más pertinentes.

Atentamente,

Luz María Moreno Medrano

Zapopan, Jal., a 22 de noviembre de 2006

Estimado(a) maestro(a),

Soy estudiante de doctorado en educación en la Universidad de Cambridge, en Inglaterra. Me encuentro en la etapa de recolección de datos para mi tesis doctoral, y es por esta razón que me pongo en contacto con usted para solicitarle su apoyo para la realización de esta investigación. A continuación explico brevemente el objetivo y la metodología de investigación.

El objetivo de mi investigación es entender de qué manera la **diversidad cultural y social** juega un papel importante en las experiencias de los estudiantes en escuelas primarias en el municipio de Zapopan. Concretamente estaré concentrada en observar y hablar con los estudiantes sobre sus interacciones y sus procesos de adaptación a la escuela; todo esto con el fin de identificar algunas de sus necesidades educativas y sugerir posibles mejoras a las políticas de atención de estudiantes de diferentes contextos socioculturales.

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A continuación le presento un pequeño formato con unas cuantas preguntas que me serían muy útiles para identificar a los niños que vienen de contextos más

vulnerables. Le agradezco de antemano su ayuda y espero tener la oportunidad de platicar más ampliamente con usted muy pronto.

Atentamente,

Luz Ma. Moreno Medrano

Nombre: _____

Grado que imparte: _____

Nombre de la escuela: _____

1. Desde su punto de vista, ¿cuáles de sus estudiantes vienen de un contexto social y económico más desfavorecido (los más pobres)? ¿Me podría proporcionar sus nombres completos?

2. ¿Cuáles de sus estudiantes considera usted que tienen mayores problemas de adaptación con el resto del grupo? ¿Me podría proporcionar sus nombres completos?

3. ¿Algunos de sus estudiantes son originarios de otro estado de la República?
_____ ¿Me podría proporcionar sus nombres completos?

4. ¿Algunos de sus estudiantes, o sus familias, pertenecen a algún grupo indígena?
_____ ¿Me podría proporcionar sus nombres completos?

De antemano, muchísimas gracias por su ayuda.

Appendix 3: Children Socioeconomic Questionnaire

Dear Student:

Hi. My name is Luz María Moreno Medrano and I am studying Education. As part of my studies, I am doing a research about the children's experiences in Zapopan schools. Would you like to help me? If you want to help me, here is a list of questions that would help me to know more about you and your family. All the information you share with me will remain confidential and anonymous. In other words, I won't tell anybody your name with the information you give me and your name won't appear in any document. There is no problem if you don't want to answer this questionnaire, just hand it in and that is it.

Thank you so much!

Sincerely,
Luzma



Personal Information

1. Full name: _____
2. Address: _____
3. Your school's name: _____
4. School grade: _____
5. Your teacher's name: _____
6. How old are you? _____
7. Where were you born? (city and state) _____
8. Do you work? ☐ Yes ☐ No What do you do? _____
9. If you work, who manage the money you make? _____
10. If you work, in what things do you spend your money? _____
11. Do you speak another language besides Spanish? ☐ Yes ☐ No Which one?

12. Who are your closest friends?



Family Information

13. How many people live in your house including you? _____
14. How many of them are adults? _____ How many are children? _____
15. Is the house where you live your own house, rented or does it belongs to a relative? _____
16. How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____
17. What is your **mother's** name? _____
18. Does your **mother** live with you? __ Yes __ No
19. Where was your **mother** born? _____
20. Does your **mother** work? __ Yes __ No ¿What does she do? _____
- 21 What school level did your mother study? (Choose an option)
- ☐ She did not go to school
 - ☐ She studied some grades at Elementary School. How many? _____
 - ☐ She finished studying Elementary School.
 - ☐ She studied some grades at Middle School. How many? _____
 - ☐ She finished studying Middle School.
 - ☐ She studied some grades at High School. How many? _____
 - ☐ She finished studying High School.
 - ☐ She studied something else after High School. What did she study? _____
22. Does your **mother** speak another language besides Spanish? __ Yes __ No
Which one? _____
23. What is your **father's** name? _____
24. Does your **father** live with you? __ Yes __ No
25. Where was your **father** born? _____
26. Does your **father** work? __ Yes __ No What does he do? _____
27. What school level did your **father** study? (Choose an option)
- ☐ He did not go to school
 - ☐ He studied some grades at Elementary School. How many? _____
 - ☐ He finished studying Elementary School.
 - ☐ He studied some grades at Middle School. How many? _____

- ☐ He finished studying Middle School.
- ☐ He studied some grades at High School. How many? ____
- ☐ He finished studying High School.
- ☐ He studied something else after High School. What did he study? _____

28. Does your father speak another language besides Spanish? __ Yes __ No
Which one? _____

29. How much money do you receive to spend at school?

- ☐ From 1 to 3 pesos
- ☐ From 3 to 5 pesos
- ☐ From 5 to 7 pesos
- ☐ From 7 to 10 pesos
- ☐ From 10 to 15 pesos
- ☐ More than 15 pesos

30. Where do they take you out? When do you go out?

31. What did you eat **before** coming to school last week?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

32. What did you eat **after** coming to school last week?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

Answer the following questions about your house. Use ✓ to say **yes**, **no** or **I don't know** in the box that best corresponds.

	Yes	No	I don't know
33. Do you have a kitchen?			
34. Do you sleep in the same room where you cook?			
35. Do you have running water (it comes through a tap)?			
36. Do you take water from a well?			
37. Do you get water from a water pipe truck?			
38. Do you have a bathroom?			
39. Do you have drainage?			
40. Do you have electricity?			
41. Do you use gas to cook?			
42. Do you have a place to wash your clothes?			
43. Do you have a sink?			
44. Do you have a basin?			

45. Do you have a shower system?			
46. Do you have a toilet?			
47. Do you have a boiler?			
48. Do you have air conditioning?			
49. Do you have a heater?			
50. Do you have a telephone?			
51. Do you have a computer?			

52. Approximately how many books do you have at home?

- ☐ From 1 to 5 books
- ☐ From 6 to 10 books
- ☐ Around 10 to 20 books
- ☐ More than 20 books

53. Does anybody help you to do your homework?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Most of the times
- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Almost never
- ☐ Never

54. Who helps you if you have doubts while doing your homework?

- ☐ My father
- ☐ My mother
- ☐ My brothers or sisters
- ☐ Some one else. Who? _____

55. Where do you do your homework at home?

56. Would you like to keep on participating with me in this research? __ Yes __
No

THANK YOU SO MUCH!



Appendix 4: Summary of the socioeconomic report of both schools

SOCIOECONOMIC DIAGNOSIS OF THE STUDENT POPULATION

Comparison between a Public and a Private School in the Municipality of Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico

Academic Year 2006-2007

By: Luz María Moreno M[♦].

Introduction

The Ministry of Education of the State of Jalisco recognizes the importance of identifying some socioeconomic indicators of the student population with the purpose of analysing their impact on the students' academic achievement, especially for students living in vulnerable conditions. Through the application of the instrument called *Cédula Socioeconómica para Alumnos de Sexto (CESOAS)*, it is possible to have some of this information; however, this instrument is only directed to 6th grade students and therefore, does not provide a complete picture of the school.

This brief report is part of a larger research on sociocultural factors in the students' lives in relation to the school and has the objective of responding to the need of generating information that would promote the development of pedagogical strategies anchored in the sociocultural reality of the students. The report is divided in four sections: school demographics, familiar composition, socioeconomic context and family resources in relation to the school demands.

School Demographics

At the beginning of December, a questionnaire was applied to students from 3rd to 6th grade in two schools (one public and one private) located at the periphery of the municipality of Zapopan. The public school has two groups per grade of approximately 45 students each, the private one has only one group per grade of approximately 25 students each. With the assistance of the teachers, the students responded to questions concerning background information and characteristics

[♦] Luz María Moreno Medrano is a doctoral student in Education at the University of Cambridge in England. Any comment or suggestion to this document will be highly appreciated. E-mail: luzma_moreno@yahoo.com.mx or lm49@cam.ac.uk

and composition of their families. The students were guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality in the use of the data and they were given the choice not to answer the questionnaire if they did not feel comfortable to. The total number of students who responded was 253 (see Table 1) out of a total of approximately 320 students in the public school, and 110 in the private school out of a total of 125. Both schools are in the same neighbourhood and although the private school charges a small fee (individualized according to the income of each family), it is directed to children in economic need.

Table 1. Number of students who responded the questionnaire

	Public School			Private School		
Grade	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
3A	10	22	32	6	19	25
3B	20	18	38			
4A	16	13	29	19	13	32
4B	21	13	34			
5A	19	21	40	16	10	26
5B	9	14	23			
6A	15	17	32	14	13	27
6B	11	14	25			
Total	121	132	253	55	55	110

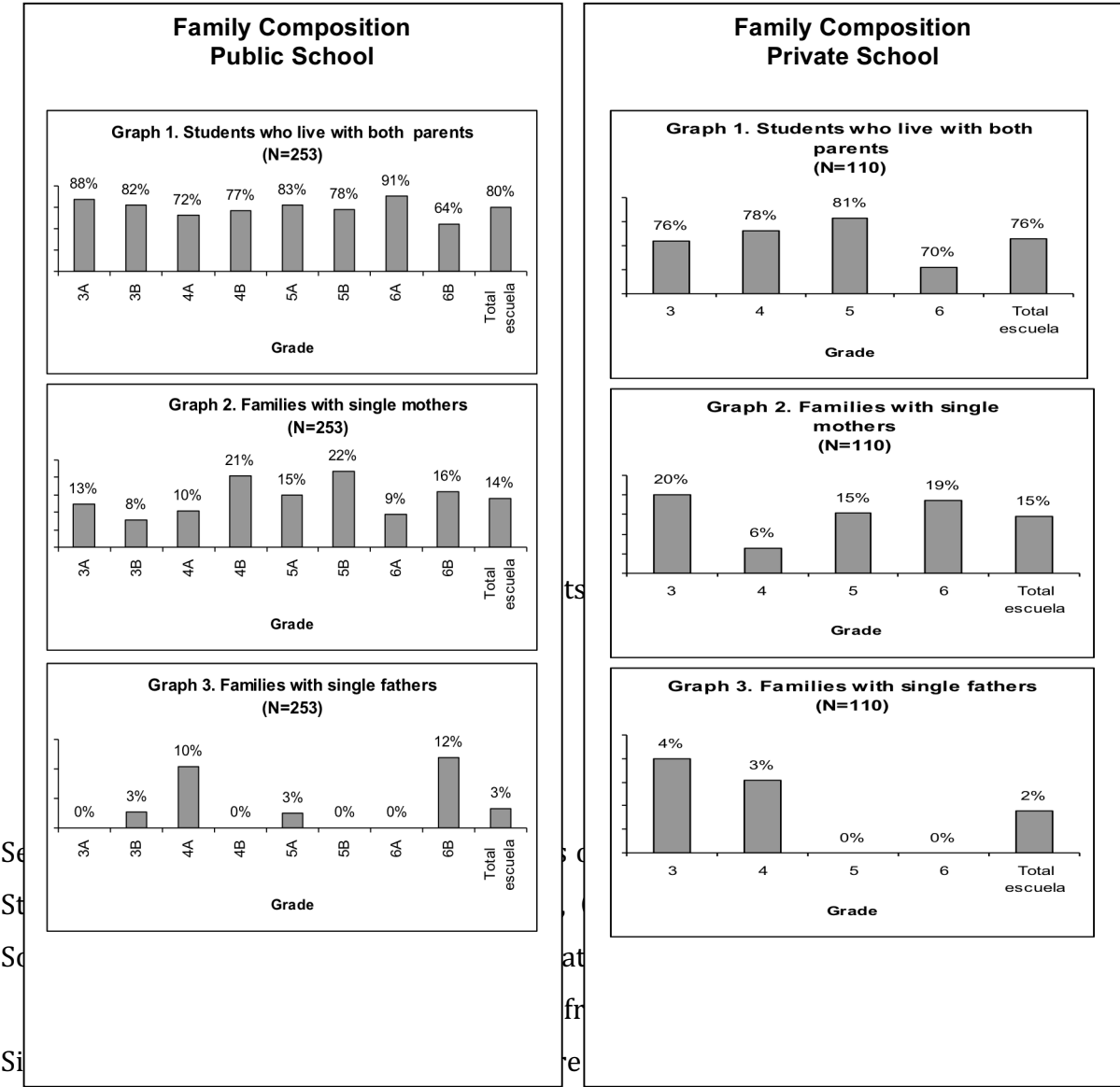
By looking at the average age of the students in each grade it was found that in the public school 7% and in the private school 6% of the students is over the expected age for the grade, maybe consequence of factors such as repetition, temporal drop out or late entrance to the school. It is interesting to note that, in the public school, the number of boys double the number of girls. Table 2 shows this information by grade and gender in both schools.

Table 2. Number of students who are over aged

	Public School			Private School		
Grade	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
3A	1	2	3	0	0	0
3B	1	2	3			
4A	1	1	2	1	1	2
4B	1	0	1			
5A	0	1	1	0	0	0
5B	0	2	2			
6A	0	2	2	2	3	5
6B	2	2	4			
Total	6	12	18	3	4	7

Family Composition

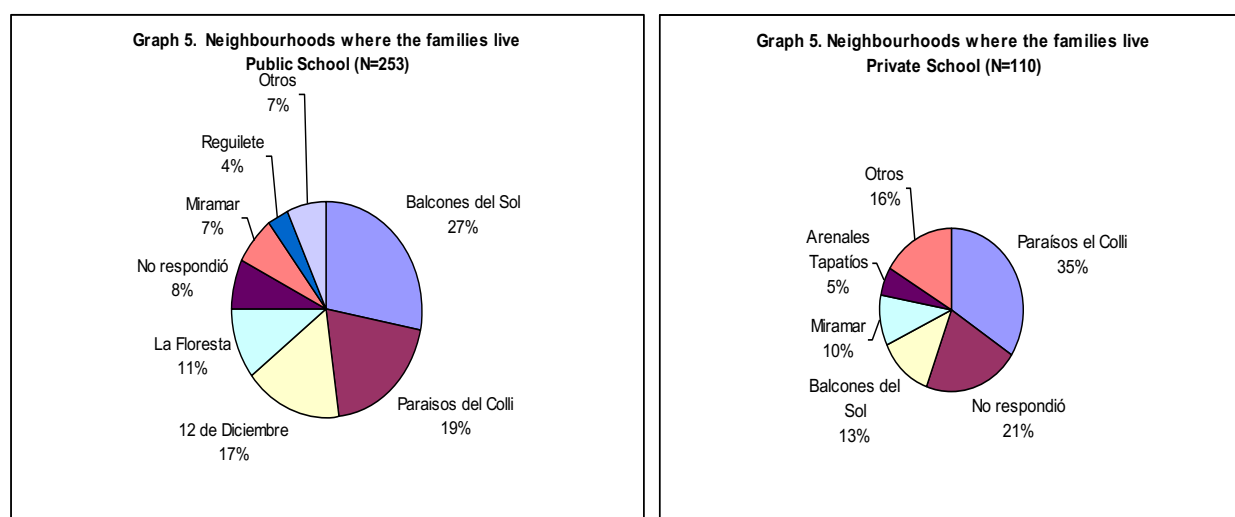
Most children live with both parents (80% in the public school and 76% in the private one). In both school around 15% of the student sample reported not living with their fathers and 2% said they do not live with their mothers. Graphs 1, 2 and 3 show this information by grade for both schools.



school this proportion was 50%. A great proportion of the families are originally from Michoacán (13% in the public school and 4% in the private). The rest of the families are from the State of Mexico (4%), and other states including Zacatecas, Nayarit, Veracruz, Puebla, Hidalgo, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Nuevo León, Morelos, Guerrero, Colima, and Chihuahua.

Socioeconomic Context

Seventeen percent of the families live in the neighbourhood '21 de Marzo' which is one of the most economically vulnerable of the area which is considered an "irregular" settlement. Around 68% of these households are the property of the parents, 12% are rented and 13% are property of a family member (grandparents mostly). The average number of people living in the households is 7, which is consistent with the data presented by CESOAS in 2005. Some families share the household with extended family members reaching in some cases 19 living under the same roof. Families have 3 children on average, but in shared households, the number of children per house reaches 16 (see Graph 5).



According to the questionnaire results and previous observations and conversations with teachers and students, it is estimated that there are 23 indigenous children in the school and 18 in the private school (See Table 3 for details of gender and grade). This information was not included in the reports submitted to the schools because it was considered that it could bias the perceptions of the teachers and principals in the subsequent months of fieldwork. It is expected to report this information as part of the final results of the research.

Table 3. Number of children whose parents speak an indigenous language by grade and gender

Public School				Private School			
Grade	Girls	Boys	Total	Grade	Girls	Boys	Total
1A	0	0	0	1A	1	3	4
1B	1	0	1	1B	2	1	3
2A	2	0	2	2A	2	0	2
2B	0	0	0				
3A	0	4	4	3A	0	1	1

3B	1	1	2				
4A	1	1	2	4A	4	2	6
4B	2	0	2				
5A	1	0	1	5A	1	0	1
5B	1	3	4				
6A	3	2	5	6A	0	1	1
6B	0	0	0				
Total	12	11	23	Total	10	8	18

Five indigenous languages were identified by the questionnaire: Nahuatl, Totonaca, Purepecha, Tarasco and Mazahua. Although only few children reported to be indigenous language speakers, their parents (either or both) speak the language.

Table 4. Indigenous languages by school grade

Public School		Private School	
Grade	Language	Grade	Language
1º	Náhuatl	1º	Purépecha Náhuatl
2º	Náhuatl Totonaca	2º	Náhuatl
3º	Purépecha Tarasco Náhuatl Totonaca	3º	Purépecha
4º	Náhuatl Purépecha Mazahua Tarasco	4º	Purépecha
5º	Tarasco	5º	
6º	Totonaca Tarasco Náhuatl	6º	Purépecha

The most represented languages are Nahuatl, Tarasco and Totonaco; however, it is interesting to note that an important number of children do not know the name of their parents' language, so many of them reported it as 'dialect'.

Table 5. Representation of indigenous languages in the schools

Private School		Public School	
Language	Number of students	Language	Number of students
Náhuatl	5	Náhuatl	2
Tarasco	5	-	
Totonaca	4	-	
Purépecha	2	Purépecha	3
Mazahua	1	-	
Do not	6	Do not	13

know		know	
Total	23	Total	18

Most indigenous parents are originally from the states of Michoacán, Hidalgo, Veracruz, State of Mexico, Oaxaca, Chiapas and Puebla.

Table 6. Origin of the parents who speak an indigenous language

Public School		Private School	
States	Number of students	States	Number of students
Michoacán	9	Michoacán	7
Hidalgo	5	Hidalgo	2
Veracruz	5	Veracruz	2
Edo. de México	1	Chiapas	1
Oaxaca	1	Puebla	1
Do not know	2	Do not know	5
Total	23	Total	18

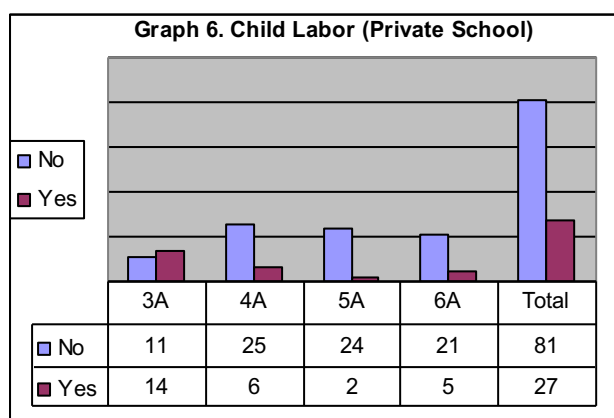
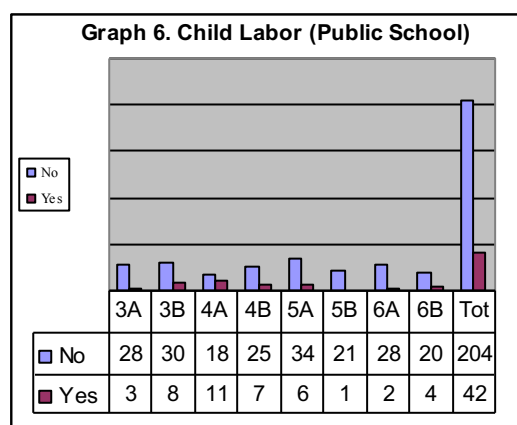
Household Characteristics

The majority of households have basic services provided in some cases out of the public service system, in the case of electricity and water provision. However, on average, children's households in the private school have access to fewer services than children's households in the public school (see Table 6).

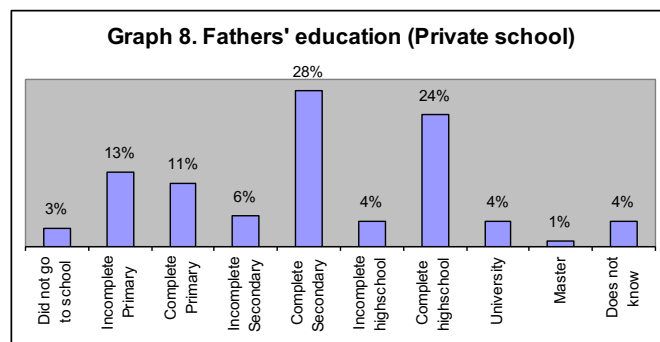
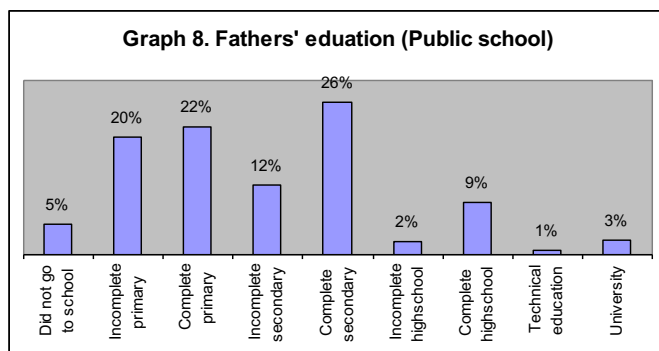
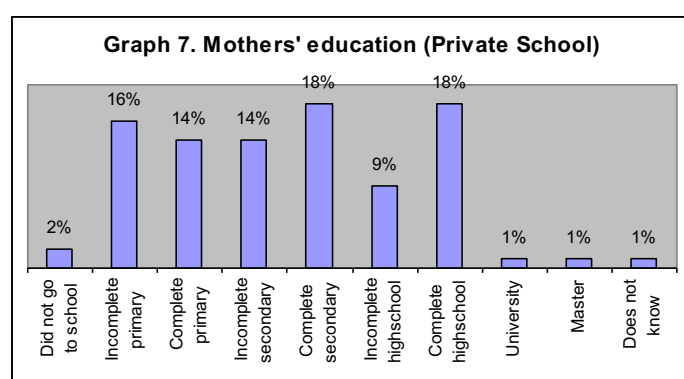
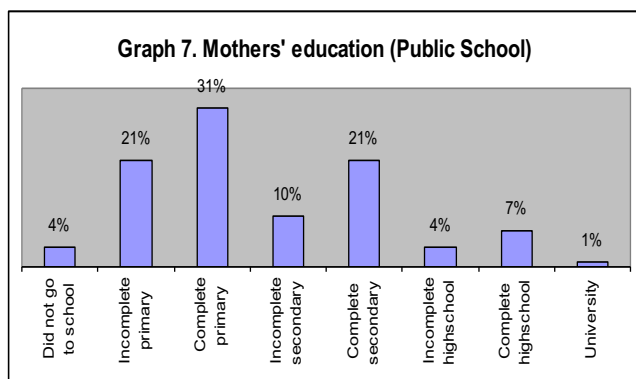
Table 6. Characteristics and Services of the Households

Households characteristics	Public School Questionnaire Results %	Private School Questionnaire Results %
With kitchen	84	68
The kitchen is also a bedroom	13	6
With running water	81	60
With water by pipes	17	22
With bathroom	93	85
With sewage	86	76
With electricity	95	86
With gas	93	84
With sink	90	70
With hand basin	56	74
With shower	53	74
With WC	78	76
With water heater	31	38
With air conditioner	15	20
With heating system	20	23
With telephone	51	78

Sometimes, poverty requires the children to contribute to work for their families' mere subsistence. In the case of the public school, out of 253 children, 42 work (31 boys and 11 girls). In the private school, out of 108 children who responded, 27 work (20 boys and 7 girls). The distribution of working children by grade is shown in Graph 6. The main occupations of these children are: street vendors in the informal sector (40%); construction workers (16%); assistants in grocery stores (8%); carpenters (5%); helpers in cleaning services (5%), among a variety of others. In many cases, the children report working at home helping their parents with the household chores and taking care of their younger siblings.

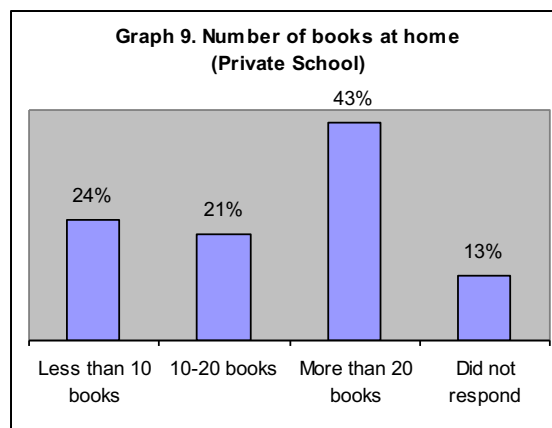
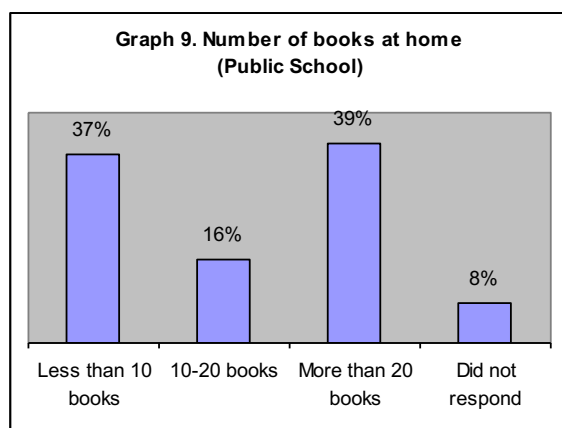


Ninety two percent of the parents are employed. The children reported a greater number of working mothers in the private school (67%) than in the public school (52%). Mothers generally work as housekeepers (57% in the public school and 45% in the private school); merchants in the formal and informal sectors (around 16% in both schools); in the food industry e.g. restaurants (10% in the public and 3% in the private school). Fathers work primarily in the construction industry (47% in the public school and 20% in the private school); merchants (13%), factory workers (6%), and activities related to the food industry (5%), among others. It was note worthy that only nine of the students (five in the public school and 4 in the private school) reported professional occupations (architect, accountant, etc.); graphs 7 and 8 show the levels of schooling of mothers and fathers in both schools.



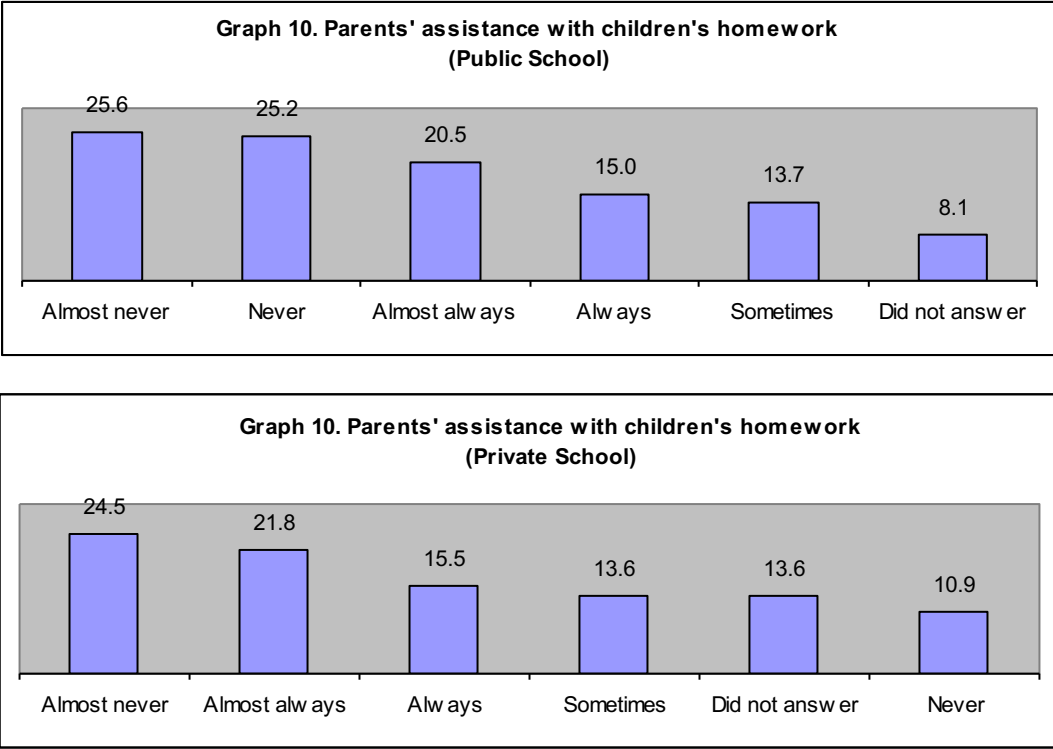
Family Resources

Children have very few resources to support their school activities at home. Considering the levels of schooling of the families and the situation of economic vulnerability of many of these children, it is common that these families do not own many books. Graph 9 shows that there is a wide gap in the access to books. Approximately 40% of the families have more than 20 books at home while 37% families in the public school and 24% in the private school have fewer than 10.



Another indicator of the resources the children have to add to their school learning is the support received by family members in doing their homework. In the public school, more than 50% of the

students reported that they never or almost never receive help when doing their homework; while in the private school this proportion is to 35% (Graph 10).



Children reported receiving help with their homework mainly from their mothers and older siblings. Fewer children reported having a desk or special table to do their homework, generally, they reported doing it in their bedrooms (40%), living rooms (8%) or on the kitchen table (6%).

Access to resources plays an important role in the learning process. Recognizing the social situation in which these children live and valuing the richness of their cultural and social contexts could offer teachers a starting point from which build up more relevant pedagogical experiences. An important number of the children population at the school live in economic vulnerability, many of them work or have responsibilities at home. In addition, the low levels of schooling of the parents do not allow the children a substantive support in their academic tasks at home. This situation has direct implications to the work within classrooms, because different from what happens in wealthier economic contexts, the role that family plays in the children academic learning is smaller. However, the dynamics of hard work and independence of these children develop a set of abilities and learning that could be retaken within the classrooms as a very rich educational experience.

These factors add to many others that are not easily identified through instruments such as this, highlight the admirable and difficult role of the teacher, who besides being a learning facilitator, is also a constant companion in the daily struggles of these children, improving their opportunities of access to a better quality of life.

Group interview using photographs



**FOTO
1**

<http://www.michaelyon-online.com/wp/operation-iraqi-children-a-bright-shining-hope.htm>



FOTO 2
Pátzcuaro,
Michoacán, México

CGEI



**FOTO
3**

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/24/international/africa/24africa.html?ex=1256270400&en=ec9c815729d472>



FOTO 4
Tacuro e Ichán,
Michoacán, México

CGEI



FOTO 5
India

<http://www.onaway.org/gallery.htm>



FOTO 6
Hidalgo. México

CGEI



FOTO 7
Tibet

<http://www.tibet-school.org/eng/pictures/barn0002.htm>



FOTO 8
Hidalgo, México

CGEI



FOTO 9
China

http://www.china.org.cn/english/MATERIAL/133712_3.htm



FOTO 10
Zambia, África

<http://www.chipembele.org/gallery2.htm>

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Group Activity "Children of the World"

1. Look at these photos, choose three and make up a title that describes them

Photo __

Photo __

Photo __

1. What photo do you like most and why?

--

4. Which children look most like to you?

--

a. What do you see in the photo?

--

b. How do those children look physically?

--

c. How do think their schools are?

--

d. What do you imagine their families are like?

--

e. What do you think is their parents work?

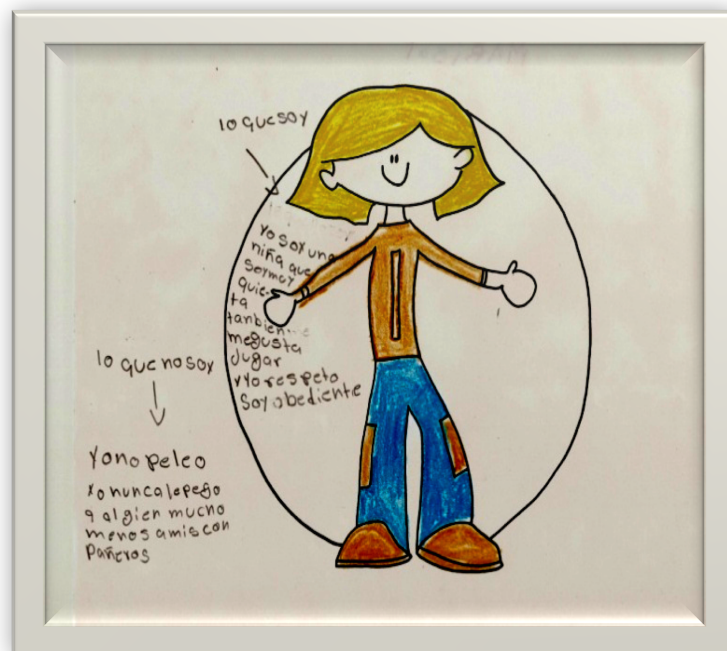
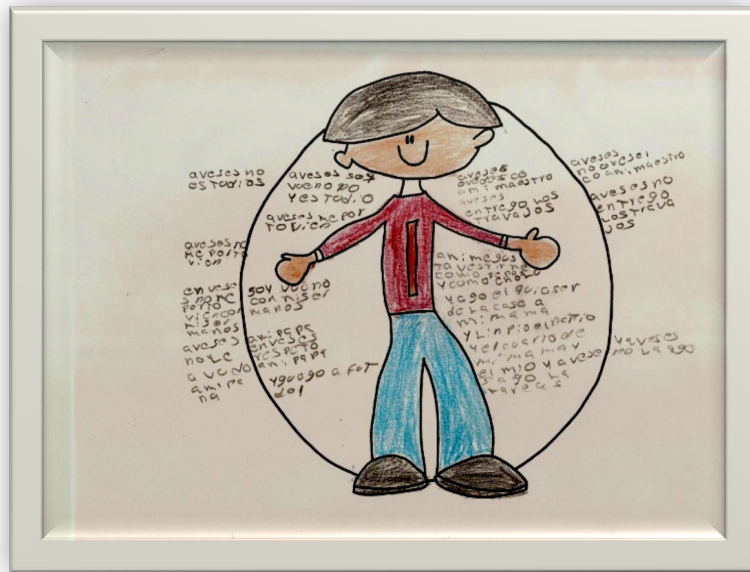
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f. How do you imagine these children when grown up?

--

g. Make a drawing of how you imagine the school these children attend.

Appendix 5: Cut-out activity “How am I, How am I not?”



Appendix 6: Children Interview Protocol

First Individual Interview

- Explain purpose of the research project – children’s schooling experiences
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Experiences that they feel comfortable sharing
- Opt-out at any time
- Reciprocity – support with academic activities

Language and Ethnicity	Lengua y etnicidad
<p>Rapport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about yourself and your family • Where were you and your parents born? • Have you been there? What is it like? <p>Indigenous children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your parents (and grandparents) speak a language different from Spanish? • Do your parents (and grandparents) speak an indigenous language? • Are your parents (and grandparents) indigenous? • What language do they speak? • Do you speak? (Do you understand?) • What language do your parents (and grandparents) speak at home? • What language do your parents (and grandparents) use when talking to you and your siblings? • Are you indigenous too? (Why not?) • What language is spoken in your parents (and grandparents) town? 	<p>Rapport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuéntame de ti y de tu familia • ¿En dónde naciste? y ¿En dónde nacieron tus papás? • ¿Has vivido allá? ¿Has ido de visita? Cuéntame cómo es <p>Niños indígenas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Tus papás (y tus abuelos) hablan otra lengua además del español? • ¿Tus papás (y tus abuelos) hablan una lengua indígena? • ¿Tus papás (y tus abuelos) son indígenas? • ¿Qué lengua hablan? • ¿Tú hablas? (¿La entiendes?) • ¿Qué lengua hablan tus papás (y tus abuelos) en casa? • ¿Qué lengua usa tus papás (y tus abuelos) contigo y con tus hermanos? • ¿Tú también eres indígena? (¿Por qué no?) • ¿Qué lengua se habla en el pueblo de tus papás (o abuelos)?
History of Migration	Historia de migración
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about the places where you have lived • For how long have you lived in Guadalajara? • Why did you parents (or grandparents) come to Guadalajara? • Where do your parents (or grandparents) work? Where did they do before coming to Guadalajara? • Have you worked some time? Where? Tell me about the experiences that you remember most • Where were your siblings born? • What have your parents (or grandparents) told you about their towns? • What are the traditions there? • What differences do you notice from the life here in Guadalajara? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuéntame de los lugares en donde has vivido • ¿Desde hace cuánto tiempo vives en Guadalajara? • ¿Por qué se vinieron tus papás (o tus abuelos)? • ¿En qué trabajan tus papás (o tus abuelos)? ¿En qué trabajaban antes de venirse a Guadalajara? • ¿Tú también has trabajado alguna vez? ¿En qué? Cuéntame algunas de las experiencias que más recuerdes • ¿En dónde nacieron tus hermanos? • ¿Qué historias te han contado del pueblo de tus papás (o tus abuelos)? • ¿Cómo son las costumbres allá? • ¿Qué diferencias notas con la vida aquí en Guadalajara?

Second Individual Interview

- Rapport – how is school and how is family
- Interview today - about your life at school

Schooling experiences	Experiencias escolares
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you like most about your school? • What do you like least? • Who has been a good teacher? Why? • Who has been a bad teacher? Why? • What characteristics do good students have? • What characteristics of bad students have? • How do you feel at school? • How do you see yourself as a student? • Who are your friends? • How do you feel with your friends? • Have you had problems with your friends or your classmates? • Are there children in the school or in the classroom with no friends? • Have you seen children who make fun of other children? • Do the teachers treat all children the same? • Have you failed a school year? Why? • What would you do to improve your school? • What do you do before (after) coming to school? • What do you do at weekends? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Qué es lo que más te gusta de la escuela? ¿Qué es lo que no te gusta? • ¿Quién ha sido un buen maestro para ti? ¿Por qué? • ¿Quién ha sido un mal maestro para ti? ¿Por qué? • ¿Qué características tienen los buenos estudiantes? • ¿Qué características tienen los malos estudiantes? • ¿Cómo te sientes en tu escuela? • ¿Cómo te consideras como estudiante? • ¿Quiénes son tus amigos? • ¿Cómo te sientes con tus amigos? • ¿Has tenido problemas con tus amigos o con tus compañeros? • ¿Hay niños que no tienen amigos? • ¿Has visto niños que se burlen de otros niños? • ¿Los maestros tratan igual a todos los niños? • ¿Has reprobado alguna vez? ¿Por qué? • ¿Qué harías para mejorar tu escuela? • ¿Qué haces antes (después) de venir a la escuela? • ¿Qué haces los fines de semana?
Expectations	Expectativas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you see yourself in the future? • Where would you like to live? Why? • What would you like to do when you finish school? • What would you like to be when you are a grown up? • What would your parents like you to be when you grow up? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo te ves en el futuro? • ¿En dónde te gustaría vivir? ¿Por qué? • ¿Qué te gustaría hacer cuando salgas de la escuela? • ¿Qué te gustaría ser cuando seas grande? • ¿Qué les gustaría a tus papás que hagas cuando seas grande?

Appendix 7: Teachers and Principals Interview Protocol

- Explain purpose of the research project – children’s schooling experiences and socio-cultural diversity at school
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Reciprocity – support with administrative activities

Professional History	Historia Profesional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of professional development and teaching experience • Experience at the school and the changes experienced during those years • Challenges and accomplishments of teaching experience • Most significant experiences in time as teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historia de su formación profesional y de su experiencia docente • Su experiencia en la escuela y los cambios que ha visto en el transcurso de los años • Los mayores logros y retos • Las experiencias más significativas en su tiempo como docente
Sociocultural context of the Students	Contexto sociocultural de los alumnos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinion on the socioeconomic background of the children at the school • Most pressing needs of the children • Reasons for the educational lagging behind of some children – identification of patterns at the school level • Identification of possible situations of discrimination – possible reasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinión sobre la situación socioeconómica de los niños • Necesidades más apremiantes de los niños • Razones del rezago escolar de algunos niños – puede identificar patrones para este rezago a nivel escuela • Identificación de posibles situaciones discriminatorias y principales razones
Cultural Diversity in the School	Diversidad cultural en la escuela
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does she/he identify a child of a different ethnic origin in the school • How does she/he find out about the children’s personal and educational needs • How does the school approach cultural diversity • What are the challenges of working in a school with scarce resources and with children of diverse cultural backgrounds • Strategies for responding to the sociocultural diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cómo identifica a un niño/a de origen étnico distinto en la escuela • Cómo conoce sus historias e identifica sus necesidades tanto personales como educativas • Cómo trata el tema de la diversidad en la escuela • Cuáles son los retos de trabajar en una escuela de escasos recursos y con niños de contextos culturales diversos • Estrategias de la escuela para responder a la diversidad sociocultural
Opinion on the academic performance and socioeconomic situation of the students	Opinión sobre el desempeño y situación socioeconómica de los alumnos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinion on the schooling situation of their pupils participating in the research study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinión sobre la situación escolar de los niños seleccionados para participar en la investigación que están en su salón de clases

Appendix 8: Parents Interview Protocol

- Explain purpose of the research project – children’s schooling experiences and socio-cultural diversity at school
- Confidentiality and anonymity
- Experiences that they feel comfortable sharing
- Opt-out at any time
- Reciprocity – support with academic activities

History of Migration	Historia de Migración
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migration histories – how long ago, reasons, family networks, occupations before and after • Ties with their communities of origin – celebrations, vacations • Organization with other people from their communities of origin here in Guadalajara • Changes in life opportunities after migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historia de migración – hace cuánto, razones, redes familiares y tipo de trabajo antes y después • Vínculos con sus pueblos – fiestas, vacaciones • Organización con gente de sus pueblos aquí en Guadalajara • Cambio en las oportunidades de vida a partir de la migración
Schooling Experiences and Expectations	Experiencias Escolares y Expectativas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinion of their children’s education – importance of education • Changes in traditions and customs of their children different from theirs in their communities of origin - between their children and their communities of origin when they are gone • Possible experiences of discrimination for belonging to an indigenous group • Permission to have a follow-up interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinión sobre la educación de sus hijos – por qué es importante estudiar • Cambios en las “costumbres” o “tradiciones” diferentes de las de sus comunidades de origen – vínculos con sus pueblos cuando ellos falten • Posibles experiencias de discriminación por pertenecer a un grupo indígena • Permiso para siguiente entrevista

Appendix 9: Evaluation form from students

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Final Questionnaire

The information that you have shared with me during this research will remain **anonymous** so you must choose a false name (pseudonym) in order to identify you in the writings and publications that would be done with the information of this research. Even the name of your school and your teachers will remain anonymous too.

1. What name would you like to use for you?
2. What name would you suggest to identify your school?
3. Did you like participating in the research? Why?
4. What did you like most? Why?
5. What did you like least? Why?
6. How did you feel during the interviews? Why?
7. Would you like to continue participating?
8. If so, is there any way that I can contact you once you finish school, any telephone of a family member, cell phone or address where I could contact you?

Thank you,
Luz Ma. Moreno Medrano

Appendix 10: Number of interviews, duration and date by student (n=44)

	Pseudonym	Grade/Gender/Type of school/Age	Mother and/or Father language	Interview 1 Date/ duration	Interview 2 Date/ duration	Interview 3 Date/ duration
1	Luis	3 rd / Male / Pub / 8	Nahuatl	8 Feb 07 / 15'12"	8 May 07 / 31'39"	Oct 07 / 30'15"
2	Juan	3 rd / Male / Pub / 9	Purepecha	8 Feb 07 / 31'52"	8 May 07 / 22'18"	11 Jun 07 / 9'16"
3	Hector	3 rd / Male / Pub / 9	-	8 Mar 07 / 12'53"	24 May 07 / 29'12"	28 May 07 / 4'21"
4	Manuel	3 rd / Male / Pub / 8	Purepecha	12 Mar 07 / 8'09"	24 May 07 / 19'48"	28 May 07 / 9'18"
5	Silvia	3 rd / Fem / Pub / 9	Purepecha	20 Feb 07 / 8'15"	20 Mar 07 / 35'54"	
6	Carla	3 rd / Fem / Pub / 8	-	15 Feb 07 / 9'35"	16 May 07 / 19'33"	21 May 07 / 4'18"
7	Omar	3 rd / Male / Pub / 9	-	15 Feb 07 / 11'50"	16 May 07 / 16'39"	21 May 07 / 6'00"
8	Alejandro	3 rd / Male / Pub / 9	-	26 Mar 07 / 29'54"	16 May 07 / 30'40"	21 May 07 / 2'45"
9	Luis Miguel	3 rd / Male / Pub / 9	Totonaco	20 Mar 07 / 38'00"	6 Jun 07 / 33'26"	11 Jun 07 / 1'30"
10	Diego	4 th / Male / Pub / 10	Purepecha	8 Feb 07 / 19'16"	8 May 07 / 34'37"	
11	Natalia	4 th / Fem / Pub / 12	-	14 Feb 07 / 15'05"	24 May 07 / 37'36"	25 Jun 07 / 4'21"
12	Susana	4 th / Fem / Pub / 9	-	14 Feb 07 / 11'12"	24 May 07 / 22'33"	28 May 07 / 4'44" 28 May 07 / 3'09"
13	Carlos	4 th / Male / Pub / 9	-	27 Feb 07 / 5'22"	28 May 07 / 23'42"	
14	Ariagna	4 th / Fem / Pub / 10	Mazahua	6 Feb 07 / 16'25"	7 May 07 / 1'05" 21"	
15	Pamela	4 th / Fem / Pub / 9	Purepecha	6 Feb 07 / 9'32"	13 Mar 07 / 36'34"	
16	Ana Rosa	5 th / Fem / Pub / 10	Purepecha	31 Jan 07 / 47'13"	8 May 07 / 32'04"	
17	Alison	5 th / Fem / Pub / 11	-	20 Feb 07 / 14'51"	30 May 07 / 16'46"	
18	Kaquira	5 th / Fem / Pub / 10	-	20 Feb 07 / 16'00"	30 May 07 / 16'32"	
19	Ivan	5 th / Male / Pub / 10	-	31 Jan 07 / 14'32"	30 May 07 / 36'24"	
20	Hugo	5 th / Male / Pub / 10	Purepecha	31 Jan 07 / 26'03"	7 May 07 / 49'54"	
21	Monica	5 th / Fem / Pub / 11	Purepecha	20 Feb 07 / 30'37"	30 May 07 / 48'07"	
22	Angel Miguel	5 th / Male / Pub / 11	-	27 Feb 07 / 8'43"	6 Jun 07 / 25'41"	8 Jun 07 / 6'00"
23	Maritza	6 th / Fem / Pub / 11	Totonaco	6 Feb 07 / 9'44"	26 Mar 07 /	25 Jun 07 / 8'24"

					27'44"	
24	Acuamarym	6 th / Fem / Pub / 11	Purepecha	1 Feb 07 / 15'49"	26 Mar 07 / 35'56"	
25	Alondra	6 th / Fem / Pub / 12	Purepecha	6 Feb 07 / 40'46"	26 Mar 07 / 26'34"	25 Jun 07 / 9'08"
26	Marcos	6 th / Male/ Pub / 11	Totonaco	31 Jan 07 / 26'42"	26 Mar 07 / 54'45"	26 Jun 07 / 7'35"
27	Andres	6 th / Male/ Pub/ 11	Nahuatl	5 Mar 07 / 14'31"	28 Mar 07 / 56'54"	26 Jun 07 / 8'14"
28	Paola	6 th / Male / Pub/ 11	-	20 Feb 07 / 27'59"	6 Jun 07 / 16'20"	25 Jun 07 / 10'30"
29	Marlen	6 th / Fem/ Pub/ 12	-	20 Feb 07 / 11'29"	27 Mar 07 / 7'12"	25 Jun 07 / 6'06"
30	Wendi	6 th / Fem/ Pub/ 12	-	20 Feb 07 / 8'00"	27 Mar 07 / 15'18"	
31	Mirian	6 th / Fem / Pub/ 12	-	28 Feb 07 / 39'17"	18 Jun 07 / 14'08"	
32	Pantera Negra	6 th / Male / Pub/11	-	12 Mar 07 / 5'57"	27 Mar 07 / 12'06"	26 Jun 07 / 14'41"
33	Agustin	6 th / Male / Pub/ 13	-	26 Feb 07 / 15'40"	18 Jun 07 / 38'34"	
34	Lilia	6 th / Fem/ Pub/11	Nahuatl	21 Mar 07 / 10'06"	29 Jun 07 / 32'09"	
35	Nacho	3 rd / Male / Priv/ 8	-	26 Feb 07 / 15'55"		
36	Sofia	4 th / Fem / Priv/ 9	Nahuatl	9 Feb 07 / 10'25"	31 May 07 / 17'08"	
37	Juan Carlos	4 th / Male / Priv/ 10	Purepecha	9 Feb 07 / 22'28"	10 May 07 / 42'22"	
38	Arturo	4 th / Male / Priv/ 13	Purepecha	26 Feb 07 / 16'59"	1 Jul 07 / 23'41"	
39	Joselin	4 th / Fem / Priv/11	-	4 Mar 07 / 8'16"	31 May 07 / 14'02"	21 Jun 07 / 5'58"
40	Angel	4 th / Fem / Priv/ 9	-	4 Mar 07 / 17'37"	31 May 07 / 11'20"	
41	Mario	4 th / Male / Priv/9	-	26 Feb 07 / 9'46"	31 May 07 / 13'36"	
42	Andrea	5 th / Fem/ Priv/ 10	Nahuatl	9 Feb 07 / 16'26"	17 May 07 / 17'56"	21 May 07 / 11'00"
43	Daniel	6 th / Male / Priv/ 11	Purepecha	9 Feb 07 / 27'13"	10 May 07 / 21'16"	1 Jul 07 / 7'47"
44	Isac	6 th / Male / Priv/ 12	-	7 Mar 08 / 31'17"	31 May 07 / 15'07"	25 Jun 07 / 22'36"
			Average of interview time	18'15"	27'53"	7'50"
			Sum of interview time	13'22'53"	19'59'08"	2'44'32"

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